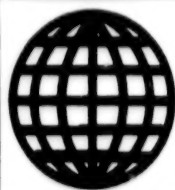


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30 APRIL 1992



**FOREIGN
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JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

ALGERIA

Near East & South Asia

ALGERIA

JPRS-NEA-92-054

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30 April 1992

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Japanese Ambassador Announces Readiness To Aid

LD2104092192 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Apr 92

[Text] Mohamed Boudiaf received two ambassadors today. The first ambassador to present his credentials to the chairman of the Higher State Council was the ambassador of Uruguay. The ambassador of Japan also presented his credentials to chairman Boudiaf, and reiterated in a statement Japan's readiness to strengthen relations with Algeria in various domains. He did not conceal his certainty that our country will be able to face up to the new requirements extremely well.

[Begin unidentified Japanese ambassador recording in French] I want to reaffirm to you the will of the Japanese Government and people to contribute, as far as possible, to the success of the efforts being undertaken by the Algerian Government and people. Thus, for instance, in the framework of cooperation, the Import-Export Bank of Japan concluded in March with the Algerian Government agreements on a \$300 million loan. [end recording]

Mozambican Ambassador on FIS, Polisario

92AF0696A Maputo DOMINGO in Portuguese 8 Mar 92 p 3

[Account of an interview with Abdel Kader Taffar, Algerian ambassador to Mozambique; place and date not given]

[Text] Algerian political life has known troubled times, especially since the beginning of the processes of political change such as those occurring in many African countries and even in Europe.

In Algeria, socialism was followed by a turnabout in political trends that brought the country to the brink of Islamic fundamentalism, with the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) winning the elections—first in the contests for the city councils and more recently the first round of the legislative elections.

But the FIS did not come to power. The second round of the elections was never held; the results of the first round were annulled, and the Army took over. Now it is the High State Committee that controls the destiny of the country and a former exile heads this government.

In a recent interview, Abdel Kader Taffar, the Algerian ambassador in Maputo, talked about what is now going on in Algeria.

Right now, Algeria needs to put its house in order. That is why we asked whether support for other peoples, the Sahrawis for example, might not be relegated to the back burner. This was the first question we put to the Algerian ambassador. He answered: "I believe that if Algeria always helped the Polisario Front [Popular Front for the

Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro], it was not because it opposes Morocco. As we see it, this is a problem of decolonization. We have always assisted national liberation movements, whether in Africa, Asia, or other parts of the globe. There are those who say that because of its internal problems, Algeria should cut back its support to the Saharans. But I do not think so, because it is a basic principle of our foreign policy that is being upheld. The provision for aid to national liberation movements is set forth in our Constitution. Now the problem of the Sahara is in the hands of the United Nations. The United Nations has a plan to organize a referendum for self-determination of the Sahara. We support this plan, and we are contributing, alongside the parties involved, so that a just and trustworthy agreement for the Saharan people will be achieved."

The principles are being upheld. But the present status of the situation suggests to us that Western Sahara risks becoming a second East Timor. Abdel Kader Taffar does not discount this possibility but according to him, it all depends on the United Nations, which must be vigilant and guarantee the implementation of the plan that was adopted to ensure that this process is not diverted by any of the parties, particularly Morocco.

In strictly internal matters, a new development occurred in recent days. A government reshuffling was announced, in which the cast of characters came to include two important members of the FIS and two women—something that could never happen under an Islamic government.

In that regard, Abdel Kader Taffar said: "The government's policy is not directed especially against the FIS, it is aimed against the use of violence to force political change. These two persons who have just been appointed are members of the founding group of the FIS, but they are against violence and have agreed to cooperate with the government in reestablishing public order in Algeria. That is why I do not consider it unusual that the High State Committee has called on these two individuals to join the governing group in order to help with the political efforts being made to resolve the current crisis."

Banning the FIS?

There has been a lot of talk about the FIS possibly being banned by order of the government. We asked the ambassador whether this is true, and what the reasons are. He answered: "The current government never had a preestablished plan to dissolve the Islamic Front. What happened is that after the armed violence carried out by members of the FIS, the government petitioned the Court of Algeria to have the FIS suspended, based on Articles 32, 33, and 34 of the political parties law, which provides for the proscription of a legal political party in the event it uses violent means to achieve its objectives."

Abdel Kader Taffar insisted that: "There is foreign interference in Algeria, and investigations are now under way to determine the intensity of that interference. However, I should point out that there is a group of

Algerians in Algeria now, people known as "the Afghans," who perpetrate violent acts. This is a group of Algerians who were recruited during the war in Afghanistan. They were trained in an Islamic country and then sent into Afghanistan to fight on the side of the mujahidin. This group has now returned to Algeria and is, as I said, planning terrorist acts. This is the group the government is keeping its eyes on now."

Then Abdel Kader Taffar explained the FIS victory in the elections by saying: "In the first place, a very significant number of Algerians abstained during the first round of the elections. Out of a population of 26 million, 5 million did not vote. In the second place, you have to consider the fraud that occurred. About 1 million Algerians never received their voter cards. Furthermore, you must remember that preparations for the elections are made at the grass-roots level, in the villages and municipalities, and the great majority of these are controlled by the FIS."

But the Algerian ambassador listed other factors, such as the great cultural crisis in Algeria. After the failure of socialism in the countries of the East, hegemonic ambitions developed among the Western countries. They intend to impose a single culture, a single way of life, on all countries. And so in Algeria there was a reflexive reaction of resistance to this cultural imposition. In the opinion of the Algerian diplomat, there is another factor, an economic one: Algeria is now going through a very severe economic crisis, and the reason is its foreign debt. Algeria paid about \$9 billion in debt service last year, which means there had to be a reduction in investment. Obviously, a large part of the Algerian population is facing economic problems in its daily life. In Abdel Kader Taffar's view, this is fertile ground for a party like the FIS to mobilize. It was pointed out that at present, about 1 million people are unemployed, and the FIS promised in its campaign to change this situation.

In contrast to some analysts' opinions, the Algerian diplomat does not believe that now that the cold war is over, we will see the rise of a new axis of confrontation: the Islamic world. He said: "Frankly, I cannot agree with this type of analysis. After the cold war and the failure of the countries of the East, the world is now embarking on a phase in which there is just one axis, and that is the Western axis. Today, the principal contradiction is a North-South contradiction. We need a new dialogue if we are to resolve the problems of the South. I do not believe it is possible for another axis to emerge, one made up of Islamic power or some other kind of power."

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Paper Predicts Ghazali Resignation 15 Apr

LD0904134692 Rabat MAP in English 1253 GMT
9 Apr 92

[Text] Algiers—The Algerian press is circulating stories about the fate of Premier Sid Ahmed Ghazali, some

reporting his resignation as imminent. For the independent EL AKHBAR [THE NEWS], the High State Committee [Higher State Council] has started contacts in search for an outstanding figure to take over as the head of government. The daily sees former Premier and Head of Military Security Kasdi Merbah as the most likely choice to step in after Ghazali's resignation on April 15.

Another independent daily EL WATAN [THE NATION] asserts that Ghazali will stay on and will go all the way in his economic reform plan. The premier will [serve] till the end of his term, despite strained relations with the mighty General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), problems encountered in every field and blows from the Islamic Salvation Front and [former Prime Minister] Hamrouche's followers through accurate attacks in the media. Some other dailies say Ghazali will stay on the Higher State Council and take over [from] Tidjani Haddam, currently in charge of the Paris Mosque.

Argument Against Ghazali Action Plan Refuted

22AF0713A Algiers L'HEBDO LIBERE in French
8-14 Apr 92 pp 20-21

[Article by A. Mezaache: "Is the Government's Action Plan Feasible"—first two paragraphs are L'HEBDO LIBERE introduction]

[Text] The main criticisms raised until now against the government's action plan do not do it justice. We do not have to point out, to begin with, that most of the critics did not propose any positive "counterplan," except for specific or partial comments.

But let's examine these criticisms; there are essentially seven [sic] of them:

1. "The action plan will not succeed because it rests on a *false diagnostic*." This criticism is based on a medical reasoning: the right treatment can be prescribed only on the basis of a correct diagnosis. All the art and science of an excellent doctor consists precisely in identifying the actual disease. But there always remains a margin of choice, of freedom, which results in some latitude in the interpretation of the symptoms, i.e., the starting assumptions, whose soundness the treatment will confirm. From this point of view, the Ghazali government's assumptions may not be numerous enough to cover the full complexity of the social reality, but they are essential to its missions and, at any rate, they are the most deciding factors (bearing in mind the two goals of the government's action: to restore the State's authority, and to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged social strata).

2. "The action plan will not succeed because it *does not have the required confidence* of the citizens." This is closer to the truth, although the priorities identified and the consultation approach that underlay the writing of the plan are such as to inspire confidence rather than mistrust. Let's remember the wall of contempt that the Hamrouche government opposed to the calls of distress

of private and public employers! Above all, Chadli's "departure" was an important token of confidence given to civil society. The government instituted by the former president led to October 1988 as surely as the reigns of Louis XVIII and Charles X led, in France, to the bloody revolution of 1848.

Along this line of criticism, some also point out that the *financing constraint* will prevent the plan from succeeding. That is true, but it is not specific to this plan, as Algeria has been living under such constraint since 1986 and its slow descent into hell since then has been the direct result of it. Mr. Ghazali, however, is the first head of government to give himself the political and legal means to get rid of this constraint once and for all. On the one hand, by providing incentives to foreign investments in the mining and in the oil and gas sectors; on the other hand, by better defining the aims of the industrial partnership policy, and, lastly, by focusing first and foremost on the national economy.

3. For these very reasons, it is also mistaken to say that "the action plan is *far more dependent on circumstances than on structures*." On the contrary, it is our opinion that it gives itself the means to overcome a crisis with facets that depend both on circumstances and on structures. The plan depends on circumstances in that it intends to deal with the causes that prevent optimum operation of the production apparatus. But it depends on structures in that it will tighten the fabric of the economic apparatus. Thus, it contemplates remodeling the organization of state-owned companies to make them more efficient, without ruling out the elimination of those that might not be viable. It also intends to boost Saharan agriculture, so as to initiate a durable change in the structure of the gross domestic product (GDP). Finally, by considering support for BTPH [building, civil engineering, housing] firms and the resumption of investments in infrastructures, it gives itself the bases for durable and self-sustained development. These orientations cannot be said to "depend on circumstances." Better still, the plan manages to take into account the need to minimize costs—bearing in mind the unknown financial factor—through a judicious strategy of intervention that will take this constraint into account while pursuing the most urgent objectives that, for their part, are defined in relation to the terrible conditions that currently prevail.

4. One—important—criticism expressed by many is that the action plan provides for "a return to state intervention in the economic sector." Is that really so? As far as foreign trade deregulation is concerned, the plan intends to start it only after foreign currency reserves have been reconstituted. But this is precisely what Hiduci himself was saying in January 1991. Foreign trade deregulation followed a few weeks later (because of the elections!), but the Central Bank of Algeria's lack of foreign-currency cash rendered it "null and void" as far as operators, dumbfounded by so much inconsistency, were concerned.

Contrary to Hamrouche, however, Ghazali drew the consequences and considered that, as long as the reconstitution of foreign currency reserves is not assured, i.e., as long as the prerequisite for the convertibility of the dinar is not met, *criteria of access* to foreign payment resources must be formulated. This means that the State is thinking of throwing back into question instruction No. 03/91 from the Central Bank of Algeria, which reserved access to foreign currency to operators possessing cash in dinars, and to them alone. This instruction, based on a policy of tapping excess cash flow, did not take into account the actual needs of the economy. As a result, as soon as it was decreed, it was challenged by economic operators, including those in the private sector who had long operating cycles (see in L'HEBDO LIBERE No 8, 23 May 1991, our article on "deregulated foreign trade").

These "criteria of access" should list the "bankability" of import operations as a nonprivileged criterion. They should also take into consideration the effect that the production of the importing firm will have on the country's economy. Besides, such criteria have already been introduced by commercial banks. In this respect, no one should question, for instance, the fact that the oil and gas sector ("the hand that feeds us") or the export sector (which generates foreign currency) might be given priority access to foreign currency. To maintain the contrary for the sake of free market economy amounts to attempting to sacrifice economy on the altar of the market!

The second reason given by critics who claim that the action plan is a return to state intervention is based on the plan's considerations concerning the need to reinstate strategic planning. First, we should point out that *planning was never eliminated* in Algeria. The law of January 1988 that instituted it is *still* in force. Every year, a *National Plan* voted at the same time as the budget has listed the order of priority of the various activities. In addition, we have a National Planning Council (CNP) that arbitrates between sectors. But, obviously, in practice Mr. Hamrouche tended to ignore the Council's responsibilities, in flagrant opposition to legal provisions (and with the tacit complicity of an APN [People's National Assembly] that was eager to support him).

Mr. Ghazali's plan, therefore, is just getting things moving again and making planning comply again with the law. But it is planning that defines the framework for State intervention, whether such intervention occurs directly through state-owned companies (investment) or whether it takes the form of a series of indirect incentives (the so-called "regulations") of a fiscal, financial, or regulatory nature. It is normal for national planning to orient economic activities in the direction most consistent with the completion of the country's objectives. It is not serious to believe that market mechanisms could replace it in this mission. To be convinced of this, let us ponder the usefulness to the country of current exotic fruit imports! Undeniably, then, the rules of the market

have destabilizing and unbalancing effects, and the role of the State is to make sure that these effects are smoothed away. This task, which is the common lot of all States, cannot be assimilated to the bureaucratic interventionism that has characterized all the previous stages, including the period 1988-1991.

This is all the more true as the action plan introduces institutional consultation between social and economic partners as an essential mechanism of planning, as it reaffirms the principle of *equality of treatment* of all operators and guarantees them sovereign freedom in making and implementing their decisions. But we should not infer from it that the State should "give up" its current responsibilities. It is therefore in this respect that the action plan displays the government's objectives in this field: to improve the economy (by eradicating speculative economy, recapitalizing state-owned companies, and fighting tax evasion), to revive the supply of goods and services (by organizing markets, boosting agricultural production, and restructuring the industry), and to protect the vulnerable social strata. These orientations probably need refining and a more in-depth investigation of their feasibility. But their internal consistency is undeniable, *in the absence of broader margins of choice*.

5. If, therefore, it is excessive and incorrect to state that the action plan is an attempt to put State intervention back in the saddle, is it more legitimate to say, with the former minister of industry and energy, Mr. Belaid Abdesselam, that the plan "*implements Hamrouche's policy without Hamrouche*"? This "criticism" is not really a criticism, since it is based on the reference to another policy, the so-called war economy policy, and above all the policy of "hard-line" State intervention, as a means to implement this war economy policy—the only choice according to Mr. Abdesselam. Naturally, if the financing constraint is not removed, we shall have to adopt such a policy, and we shall all have to resign ourselves to its consequences that, by the way, might turn out to be not much more of a hardship than what we have now.¹ However, to paraphrase Aragon, "unhappiness, like happiness, is never compulsory." In other words, if Mr. Ghazali is implementing Hamrouche's policy without Hamrouche, he does it better because he has mixed hope into it.

6. In conclusion, we should briefly mention the criticisms expressed by some. The first, and the least serious consists in saying that the plan does not pay enough attention to the *financial reorganization* of state-owned companies, "which is lumped together with the fight against speculation." Frankly, this criticism does not make sense if one considers the amounts allocated in the 1992 budget (42.5 billion dinars), the decisive acceleration of the reorganization operation achieved by Mr Ghazali since June 1991 (responsibilities given to the Treasury, simplification of the applications examination process, etc.) and in particular the opening up of prospects more serious and more promising of a recovery than during the era of (purported) reforms."

The second criticism is an expression of apprehension rather than an open criticism. For this reason, it seems more justified. Briefly, it consists in saying that, through its economic recovery objectives, the action plan *may make inflation worse* because of the time lag between the injections of financial resources (through investments) and the corresponding expected increase in the supply. In passing, we should say that, in the jargon of economists, this is called "growth inflation," and the consensus is that, although it may be unavoidable, it is nevertheless permissible since it eventually brings about its own demise, somehow.

The dilemma arises when the expected supply of excess investment does not materialize. In that case, the general level of prices rises to restore the balance between supply and demand, assuming of course that imports are not possible. And if imports are allowed, there is a real risk of a trade balance deficit. Pending a more detailed evaluation of this inflation risk, we may still, without engaging in an in-depth debate, propose two irrefutable preliminary assumptions:

—The first one is that, even in the absence of recovery, the Algerian economy may be confronted with the possibility of a worsening of inflation due, on the one hand, to the blind, runaway devaluation that has affected the dinar since June 1990 and continues to display its perverse effects² and, on the other hand, to the speculation on rare goods and services that are "assailed" by a built-in excess demand.

—The second is that, by stressing the expansion of the supply of goods and services, the recovery plan ensures that one of the causes of inflation will disappear in the intermediate term, even though it cannot help fueling it in the short term. Note however that the planned investments are for the most part chosen based on their rapidity of maturation, which reduces the short-term risk. But, all in all, inflationary growth is preferable to inflationary recession. Eventually, to the extent that the government's action plan may contribute to revive hope, it may regain the confidence of the citizens, which it needs in order to succeed. It should however be "marketed" much more vigorously than it has been until now. It should convince people that it is not just the government's business. Finally, it should be part of a dynamic current toward resolute political change. By the way, the national patriotic rally, what is that?

Footnotes

1. This does not mean that it would be easy to implement. Actually, its implementation would imply:

—an equitable rationing system independent from the income structure; —control and unfailing repression of the black market that could not fail to ensue;

—a widespread spirit of voluntary sacrifice;

—a more homogeneous and morally irreproachable executive branch;

—finally, a minimal degree of rupture with the world economy.

2. People wondered that the actual 1991 rediscount ceilings of the Central Bank of Algeria were considerably higher than projected. Yet, this was to be expected, as it is the direct result of the effect that the runaway devaluation of the dinar has on a rigidly structured trade balance. The myth of the Central Bank of Algeria's independence collapsed of its own!

Ait Ahmed on Political Situation

92AF0615B Algiers EL WATAN in French 16 Mar 92
pp 1, 3

[Interview with Hocine Ait Ahmed, leader of the Socialist Forces Front, by Mohammed Larbi; place and date not given: "Ait Ahmed: Boudiaf or the Apparatus, Which Will Win?"; first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] Ait Ahmed's analysis of the situation in Algeria is clearly pessimistic. According to him, we have not seen the last of the old practices with which there must be a complete break.

[Larbi] Since 11 January, the parties (although not all of them) have gone back to issuing communiques. Why?

[Ait Ahmed] The purpose of the meeting between the members of the HCE [High State Committee] and the party representatives was to announce an important decision to the latter: it was intended solely, in fact, to calm their fears and assure them that their activity would not be hampered by the introduction of the state of emergency. In practice, however, the intention, purely and simply, is to stifle democratic freedoms, pluralism, and political life in general. There is not even a list of the people being held in custody, with the result that families do not know which camps their children have been sent to.

There is a real gap between words and deeds. Our seminar was banned on the pretext that there were speakers who were not members of the FFS [Socialist Forces Front]. We are the only representative democratic party, and we would like to have been able to pursue certain activities.

[Larbi] A democratic party is what you call it, but Ghazali says the opposite.

[Ait Ahmed] Ghazali did not stop there. He said that the FFS did not want to have dialogue with the Algerian Government, thus implying that we do have dialogue with foreign governments. For the past two years we have been asking to be trusted, we have been engaging in political activity, and we have been building a party with which to ask for the Algerian people's approval. We do not expect the approval of the international press or foreign governments; we are seeking it from the Algerian people by proposing solutions and a program.

[Larbi] Ghazali has also presented a plan.

[Ait Ahmed] From the standpoint of procedure, it must be noted that there has never been any consultation with the political parties. It is easy to justify that by saying that there are no partners to consult.

Perhaps denying the existence of the parties enables him to dispense with consulting them.

As for its content, what we are faced with is a plan that mixes a certain degree of state control with ultraliberalism. That being said, I don't believe that any economic plan can succeed without democracy. The old refrain about real freedoms—that is, solving social problems—is finished. They used to say that "the Indians vote but are starving, while the Chinese do not vote and are fed."

Nowadays, we find that the Indians are still voting and that their economy is growing, whereas the Chinese are dying under dictatorship. So it is surprising that thinking in our country should be regressing to the point that its leaders are adopting the old economic and social alibis put forward by the dictatorships to prevent people from taking charge of their own destinies.

[Larbi] Judging from what you say, there is a logical link between the text of the state of emergency and all the rest—that is, more money for the parties and the recovery of state property.

[Ait Ahmed] We were the first party to ask that the FLN [National Liberation Front] be subject to equal and nondiscriminatory treatment and that all the property it had seized be returned to the state because it is public property. The FFS has just lost four offices. It is the victim of a genuine attempt to stifle it, and I notice, by the way, that they are launching a party called the patriotic rally with state money and the state-owned media. That party will be a revised edition of a single party. None of that is healthy, and there needs to be a debate on the state of pluralism in our country.

We cannot be content with the statements by the minister of foreign affairs, who said that Algeria was respecting human rights, when there are situations of distress in the security camps and arbitrary arrests.

[Larbi] Why that opposition to the proposed rally?

[Ait Ahmed] Popular legitimacy is the only thing that counts, and one cannot set historical legitimacy or revolutionary legitimacy in opposition to it. The election of a constituent assembly is more essential than ever. A constitutional base is the most urgent thing. A party that wants to stay close to the masses cannot be created in an atmosphere of repression in which freedom of the press is threatened and where there is not only censorship but also self-censorship, which is more serious because the sword of Damocles is being held over reporters' heads—that is, what I call Penal Code Number 2, meaning the Information Code.

[Larbi] According to Ghazali, the print media are being manipulated.

[Ait Ahmed] They talk about the print media, but I notice that he still inhabits television.

[Larbi] The crisis is everywhere. Where do you feel that we should begin?

[Ait Ahmed] By cleaning up politics. I do not smile when I hear people talk about corruption, because it is dramatic. There is corruption first of all at the political level. It is because of the absence of freedom in the broad sense that there are people who can enrich themselves without limit and without control. Proof of this can be seen in the importation of bananas and pineapple. It is indecent. The people need things more essential than that.

[Larbi] It is private firms that are doing it.

[Ait Ahmed] And they are doing it because they have government authorization. The line of credit made available by Italy was used by private firms. As long as there is no change in political personnel, we will continue to hear about such things.

[Larbi] Boudiaf is promising a radical change.

[Ait Ahmed] I hope he keeps his promises.

[Larbi] You know him very well. Do you think he can carry out that task successfully?

[Ait Ahmed] There may be very noble intentions—I don't doubt it. There may be willingness on the part of one person, but there is also the logic of the apparatus. Who, in the final analysis, is going to impose his own logic? That is the big question.

[Larbi] There is talk of establishing an advisory council. Have you been contacted?

[Ait Ahmed] Not at all. Practices have not changed, but still the parties and the population are being asked to rally around. I think that is very unhealthy. It is the duty of government officials to realize that in the constitutionally abnormal situation being experienced by the institutions, it is time to restore hope to Algerians by setting some dates.

[Larbi] You say you are against the fundamentalist state, but you are against the dissolution of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]. Isn't there a contradiction there?

[Ait Ahmed] Our resistance to dictatorship is moral and ethical. This does not mean that politically, we agree with the adage that says "better Algeria should perish than a principle." We feel that dissolution of the FIS is a mistake politically. Repression has always been a factor in radicalizing people.

But the mosques must be depoliticized. Also, why not remove the loudspeakers, which constitute a social constraint? Our people, who are a people with common

sense, must know that social conformity is not the same as religiosity. Keeping up appearances encourages hypocrisy. Our prophet, may salvation be upon him, preferred the voice because it is soft and human. It is necessary to create an environment of "rahma" [compassion] and no constraint. We feel that our institutions lack legitimacy, but that is not why we reject dialogue.

[Larbi] How about getting back to the first question?

[Ait Ahmed] I believe there is a police connection. We are not wrong in always rejecting both the police state and the fundamentalist state, because there is a dialectic of complementarity and solidarity between them. There is a historical deadlock that means that if a person is against the one, he is for the other.

We reject that logic. We feel that we are faced with an action that is more repressive than positive. And that is the action concerning the FIS and the bringing to heel of the press. There is consistency in the action being taken by the current government: it involves the gradual extinction of democracy while maintaining the appearance of democracy.

Party Leaders Respond to Charges Against Chadli

92AF0645A Algiers *LE SOIR D'ALGERIE* in French
18 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Salim Lamine: "The Political Parties React"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Algiers—Mr. Ahmed Ben Bella has shocked the nation with his charge that the former president, Mr. Chadli Bendjedid, misappropriated public funds. Yet another scandal, it confirms the public's mistrust of those who govern them and seriously undermines the credibility of certain politicians. In interviews on this very thorny question, presidents and officers of political parties did not hesitate to express their views and opinions. Some believe it is wrong to strike a man when he is down; others say that such serious charges should be substantiated with proof; and there are those who point to a need to address the cause of the disease—the entire system of public management—rather than its symptoms. Finally, a number of intellectuals believe that this scourge must be attacked if the problems of society are to be effectively addressed. It is the responsibility of those now in power to shed full light on instances of misappropriation and other forms of corruption, relying solely on proof and avoiding the dangerous game of settling old scores, which could only hurt Algeria's standing.

Kasdi Merbah, President of MAJD

Mr. Kasdi Merbah stated that "MAJD [the Algerian Movement for Justice and Development] places a great deal of importance on raising the standards of public life, fighting corruption and waste, and reducing government expenditures as well as on austerity and national solidarity."

"We have always condemned corruption and waste and consistently advocated that practical measures be adopted."

Such measures include: requiring all those who hold high-level positions in government to disclose their wealth; publishing the report by the Cour des Comptes, which should play an effective role; and publishing a record of funds spent by the heads of state and of government. In addition, a program to investigate past corruption should be implemented so that lessons may be drawn in order to prevent such deeds from happening again. I personally spoke out on television against the purchase of a Tristar presidential airplane that was later sold at a great loss without ever having been used."

In conclusion, he said that the bonds of trust between the citizens and the state could be restored only by raising the standards of public life, fighting corruption, installing a government that truly serves the citizen, applying austerity programs first of all to high-ranking public officials, and by fighting waste in all its forms."

Chawki Salhi, President of the Socialist Workers Party (PST)

"We will neither forgive nor forget any infringement of the freedoms of others or any appropriation of public property," Mr. Chawki Salhi declared. "We do not think much of those who direct their accusations solely against deposed leaders."

"We do not have the means that Mr. Brahimi has to count the billions that were stolen, but we saw that fortunes were being amassed and that palaces were being built. We urge the crusaders against corruption to concern themselves with all those who are guilty of it, whether they are in or out of office, and to do so with audits, oversight by the public, and full disclosure."

Cheikh Mahfoudh Nahnah, President of HAMAS

"Concerning the former president's statements about the deposed president," said Cheikh Mahfoudh Nahnah, "we believe that the author of those statements is free to raise a problem or take a stand in a manner that enables him to avoid bringing harm to himself or to others. Islam requires that the accuser supply the proof and that the accused pronounce his denial under oath. While it is easy for people to talk about those who are in office and those who have left office, the fundamental problem lies in obtaining proof and truths that can withstand any challenge." "However," he added, "we in the Movement of Islamic Society (HAMAS) see two points to be made."

"The first is that our economic troubles are deeply rooted. They are not the product of a particular period or era. They date back to independence and have persisted to this day. The second is that "weighty" issues must be settled without attacking anyone or resorting to lies. It goes without saying that this task will contribute a great deal to solving the crisis which is both economic and political."

Mustapha Ben Mohamed, General Secretary of the Labor Party (PT)

"I must say one thing," Mr. Ben Mohamed declared, "we are convinced that officials have been taking the people's money for their personal profit ever since independence. All Algerians who were excluded from the decision-making process watched helplessly as a bourgeoisie emerged and developed to the point that it now has 6,000 billionaires."

"Of course, this statement is a timely one, revealing that the external debt is not the people's debt," he said. "And now, all those who had a role in denying food to the people must be put on trial. But in order to try them, there must be a truly independent system of justice which can come only from elected constitutional institutions subject to the oversight of the people."

"For that reason, we reiterate that, now more than ever, free and democratic elections must be held for a constituent assembly with full decisionmaking powers that would appoint a government accountable to it, a government capable of fostering political, economic, social, and cultural development responding to the aspirations of the masses. It goes without saying that these institutions must shed full light on the misappropriation of public funds."

Rachid Bouabdellah, President of the Union of Forces for Progress (UFP)

"We can only applaud Mr. Ben Bella's statement, particularly in view of the fact that we were the first to demand an investigation into the matter of the 26 billion [dirhams]," said Mr. Rachid Bouabdellah.

"In any case, all ill-gotten gains must be returned to the state by those responsible or their associates," he continued. "If the current government is at all interested in winning the credibility and trust of the people, it should immediately enact measures for the legal protection of assets in the hands of the officials of this country to prevent any loss." In conclusion, he stated that, "that misappropriation occurred is a fact visible to the naked eye. Displays of wealth are the beginnings of proof with which a case may be brought before the courts. It is up to the appropriate authorities to supply the evidence."

The problem is clear and we should begin making a principle of asking the question, "How did you come by that?" In other words, if we do not halt corruption, Algeria will never rise out of its miasma and stagnation."

Sofiane Djilali, General Secretary of the Party of Algerian Renewal (PRA)

"Algerians are extremely sensitive to the misappropriation scandals that frequently punctuate public life, unfortunately without the culprits ever being punished," said Mr. Sofiane Djilali. "The tragedy of this country is that the system in power has shuffled the cards so that no one appears responsible for his actions. Chadli Bendjedid's responsibility is at stake in the question of how

public funds were managed and what happened to them, during the many years he served as head of state. It is dangerous, however, that a politician should make such serious accusations against a former head of state, through the media and without possessing solid pieces of evidence.

It is up to those in power, through the intermediary of the justice system, to shed light on all instances of corruption, which should be handled with the rigor and impartiality required in a country governed by the rule of law."

Nacer Sakhri, Chief of Staff, PNSD [National Party for Solidarity and Development]

"It is wrong to strike a man when he is down," said Mr. Nacer Sakhri.

He went on to raise the question of why these declarations were made, adding that they reflect a lack of courage as they were not made at the time of the act. Finally, he believes that there must be proof. If there is proof, a trial can take place.

Ahmed Mahsas, President of the Union of Democratic Forces (UFD)

Mr. Ahmed Mahsas said that he takes very little interest in sensational matters, but went on to state that "the cases of misappropriation are the product of management practices." In his view, the true causes of this phenomenon—rather than its effects—must be addressed. "The entire system would have to be re-examined," he said in conclusion.

Expectations for Change Said Diminishing

92AF0682B Paris LE MONDE in French
13 Apr 92 pp 2, 4

[Article by special correspondent in Algiers Georges Marion: "Algeria Disabused"—first paragraph is LE MONDE introduction]

[Text] Three months after President Chadli's resignation-deposition, the "radical change" promised by the new government is a long time coming.

No one expected Algeria to solve instantly the problems that plague it. But no one either thought that the country would so soon settle into gloom, disabused of the promises of a government which, although it talks a lot about reform, seems unable to tackle the task.

A few days after the installation of the High State Committee (HCE), the former prime minister, Mr. Mouloud Hamrouche, who opposed the suspension of the electoral process and, moreover, is a fierce opponent of his successor, Mr. Sid Ahmed Ghazali, had given the government "one month" before it would be forced to resign. On this particular point, his prognostic proved false. But basically Mr. Hamrouche was not far off: three

months after the coup that ousted President Chadli and opened the government doors to Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf, paralysis is setting in.

Among the anti-Islamists, the cancellation of the elections had given rise to hopes that the coup, although unpleasant for people who claim to be democrats, would at least blow up the old system, while making reforms necessary, irreversible. Half-measures and a return to old ways are no longer possible, several political leaders estimated at the time. In short, the moment of truth had come. Last month's limited cabinet reshuffle had the effect of an ice-cold shower. People expected a "radical change," as promised by all including President Boudiaf. The least skeptical are now convinced of the system's lack of flexibility, as it experiences insuperable difficulties in promoting the new men that could stand for both competence and change.

In the past three months, the HCE has thus seemed unable to appoint the 60 or so individuals "above all suspicion" who are to form the Consultative Council, the organization that is supposed to replace the dissolved Parliament.

At a time when rumors of differences, always denied but never dispelled, increasingly arise between the prime minister and the HCE, interminable and apparently unsuccessful dealings are taking place behind the scene in an attempt to draw the profile of the best candidates to an Assembly whose actual powers, anyhow, still remain ill-defined.

This is only one side of the matter. More concrete are the problems experienced by the government in normalizing a situation that is still marked by numerous acts of violence. At the time of its installation, the HCE put at the top of its agenda the restoration of State authority, i.e., it intended to regain the political initiative that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had seized. It achieved part of its objective and the Islamist party, most of whose leaders are imprisoned or have fled, seems seriously hurt. But the social unrest that is expressed by the fundamentalists did not abate and, although thousands are now detained in the "security camps" of South Algeria, it fuels the most determined acts of anger.

Theft and Assault

One month ago, official figures concerning the confrontation between the Islamists and the police mentioned 103 dead (including 31 among the police) and 414 wounded. Since then, these figures have increased, and the nights of Algiers are often troubled by the firing of automatic weapons. Despite the institution of the state of emergency, members of the police and the army are attacked on their way home, either by individuals or by highly mobile groups. Desirous to show that it has the situation well in hand, the government just denied that it was about to institute a curfew. Nevertheless, no one thinks such a measure can be postponed if the attacks continue.

Quite as worrying, crime—the consequence of rapid and unavoidable pauperization—has increased in previously unknown proportions. Algiers, usually a safe city, is getting acquainted with urban insecurity. Car thefts are on the rise, and many vehicles drive without headlights—removed by clever thieves, during the day or at night, these are immediately sold on the sidewalks of the Belcourt neighborhood, with other accessories of similar origin.

Assaults, although still few, are no longer rare. Within a few days, three Frenchmen were the victims of such assaults: one died, another was seriously wounded. The silence maintained by the authorities, and the French Embassy's instructions to be discreet, caused the worst rumors to spread, letting people believe, mistakenly, that these were crimes of intimidation designed to force foreigners to leave the country, as was demanded in an anonymous letter sent to the press a few days before. These events coincide with a disastrous economic situation. The stabilization—actually, the restarting—of firms paralyzed by abysmal deficits is on the agenda, but there is no money to carry it out. Proponents and opponents of a privatization policy are once again fighting following the minister of mines' recent statements that some of the national economic assets might be sold to foreign investors. In this bitter polemic, however, everybody seems to forget one detail: these investors' reluctance, to say the least, to contribute fresh money when the legal framework that would guarantee their stakes remains blurred and factories are in an advanced state of disrepair.

With the new law allowing foreign oil companies to invest in already active fields, the government expected to obtain several billion dollars quickly. But negotiations are dragging, stumbling over the Algerians' reluctance to grant investors control over production. Therefore, the eagerly awaited money is lacking, which prevents the reconstitution of foreign currency reserves and accordingly delays the implementation of the economic recovery plan that depends on it.

With the government—and apparently even the opposition parties—thus bogged down, and with a prevailing atmosphere marked by repeated accusations of corruption against former President Chadli, rumors keep spreading, fueled by the silence of a government that shrinks from problems. The more persistent mention of disagreement at top level, which might lead to a change of prime minister. The more alarming mention the possibility of an army takeover—a sort of coup within the coup—in an attempt to save once again what can be saved. Actually, it is the army that will eventually decide of the future. A tightly closed social body, the military insistently hint that their only dream is to return to their barracks and let the civilians govern. The reality is probably not that simple, and it would be surprising that the military did not share all the society's concern as to the country's future.

The recent resignation of General Mohammed Lamari from his position as commander of the land forces, simultaneously with the release of several hundreds of Islamists, was thus interpreted as a sign of the differences that trouble the high command as to the attitude they should adopt toward the Islamists. Since then, Gen. Lamari was promoted as an adviser to General Khaled Nezzar, a member of the HCE and minister of defense. But this appointment was not enough to convince people that the resignation that preceded it was a "purely personal" matter, as the authorities unofficially presented it.

Dialogue Among Political Parties Said Blocked

92AF06854 Algiers EL WATAN in French
30 Mar 92 p 1

[Commentary by M. T. Messaoudi: "Dialogue at a Deadlock"]

[Text] The Algerian political scene does not seem about to revive the partisan activity that public opinion had become used to. The conditions for such a return to normal life have not been met, officials answer whenever the question is asked.

Yet, inactivity weighs heavy on the party leaders who gave their all, especially just before the legislative elections of 26 December, in the hope of playing a part in the management of the country's affairs. This is why they are now demanding that the new government should start a national debate that might reassure them as to the prospects for democracy, and would enable them to monitor the political change that the country will have to undergo.

The current government does not seem to hear these almost continual calls for a dialogue coming from opposition forces such as the FLN [National Liberation Front], the FFS [Socialist Forces Front], HAMAS [National Society for Guidance and Reform], or the PRA [Algerian Renewal Party]. Is Boudiaf already viewing these parties as his future rivals when the National Rally is created? The creation of another political formation from a strategic starting position seems to worry most party leaders who fear a return of the single-party system. Faced with such inflexibility on the part of the government, the opposition quite naturally used acerbic words and adopted very critical positions toward the head of the government. The FLN, for instance, does not give a chance to Ghazali's party which, it says, can take shape only in "a climate of tension and mistrust." The internment camps are called "gulags" by the FFS. Even when they are moderate, exchanges of criticism are further broadening the gap between the government and the opposition, and reduce the chances that a dialogue will be started. Such a dialogue does not seem to be among Boudiaf's priorities; his ignoring the opposition looks like his way of saying that he has better things to do. But, as far as political prospects are concerned, we are still in the dark.

Efforts To Suppress Violence; Death Toll Given*92AF0697C Algiers REVOLUTION AFRICAINE
in French 9-15 Apr 92 p 13*

[Text] Terrorist attacks aimed at everyone wearing a uniform have resumed with a vengeance recently. Unfortunately, there have been a large number of victims. Families are in mourning. Children have been orphaned in the name of "a blind kind of justice." Those responsible for these attacks and those who claim responsibility for them, draped in their heresy, which dates from the Middle Ages, are not unaware that they are sowing death freely. Policemen, the children of the people, are cut down in the streets in a cowardly way, at times in the prime of life, because, in the eyes of these killers from another age, they had made the immense mistake of trying to maintain order. The list of those killed is long and unacceptable. Since 9 February 1992, the date when the state of urgency was proclaimed, terrorist violence has resulted in nearly 40 persons killed and 128 wounded. Among those who have been killed are even those who had the difficult task of administering this state of urgency: the security forces.

The terrorist escalation began in particular with the decision of the judicial authorities, ordering the dissolution of the organization principally responsible: the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS]. Those small groups, made up of the hardest and most fanatical people who claim to support this party and who constitute its armed wing, have openly gone into action and seem to be well organized.

For the moment these gangs of criminals, who recognize neither faith nor law other than sowing terror, for the most part are located in the Algiers area and in particular in the Wilayat of Blida. This is the home ground of the Bouiali group, which has now been broken up. Then and apart from the fact that they attack everyone who represents the authority of the state—in uniform—these gangs are trying to pick up weapons. The bloody clashes at the frontier post of Guemar and at Beni Merad (Wilayat of Blida) were undertaken for this purpose. There is no doubt that those responsible for these criminal actions, are supported to great effect by the financial and logistical resources provided by the APC's [People's Communal Assemblies] controlled by the FIS. They are trying to set up a reserve of war materiel for later use and to move on to a higher stage of the struggle. The problem is that our security forces are not prepared for this antiterrorist fight. The fact is that this kind of thing is still unknown to us.

Furthermore, the measure recently approved by the Ministry of the Interior, consisting of organizing brigades specialized in the struggle against terrorism, is a welcome development, despite the fact that it comes a little late in the day. There is discussion of sending groups undergoing training to foreign countries, particularly to a number of countries which have had experience with this kind of situation, such as Spain and Italy.

Meanwhile, police personnel are being "hunted down," despite everything. The fact is that these small groups of terrorists do not act spontaneously—far from it.

For the moment the aggressors do not have enough weapons, although the traffic across the borders makes one think that this particularly juicy gap in our defenses is exploitable and tempting.

This is because if the smuggling mafia are able to bring large quantities of various drugs into Algeria, including on the backs of donkeys, they are sufficiently well-organized to change their area of activity. As a result, the spiral of attacks is growing larger. That is apparently the view of all of the extremists who challenge the authority of the state by all means. During this past weekend we saw them defying the decision to prohibit Friday prayers outside of the mosques or to have their own celebration of the feast of Id al-Fitr, before the majority of the Algerian people.

When he spoke to the Algerian people on the occasion of the feast of Id al-Fitr, President Boudiaf prayed to God "that this festival might be an occasion to lay the foundations for peace and to encourage feelings of fraternity." He took the occasion in particular, "to reiterate the determination of the HCE [High State Committee] to defend the institutions and the security of our people." This is certainly a serene but firm way of carrying out fully the effort to improve public health, including the eradication of the specter of senseless killings.

Brigade Formed To Combat Fundamentalist Groups*92AF0697D Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
4 Apr 92 p 3*

[Text] The Ministry of the Interior has decided to set up an "antiterrorist cell" to deal with the wave of urban terrorism, which has already resulted in the murder of about 30 police officers since the proclamation of the state of urgency at the beginning of February 1992. In that way the authorities have recognized the reality of this terrorism.

In the view of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], which is now being dissolved, the increase in the number of attacks is the individual response of Islamists to the "institutionalized terror" of the new government authorities, who have ordered the arrest of nearly 10,000 persons, according to official figures.

However, hundreds of these persons have been released during the past three days, and it has been announced that other releases will take place during the next few days.

General Mohamed Lamari, the commander of the Army, disagrees with these releases. He has reportedly either resigned or been retired, according to two contradictory reports circulating in Algiers.

The attacks, which have taken place since the beginning of February, have been well chosen and essentially involve police agents.

Among the most recent victims is a traffic policeman who was shot in Blida (50 km South of Algiers), a police inspector who was stabbed in Boufarik (35 km South of Algiers), and a noncommissioned officer and a soldier of the Republican Guard murdered near the international airport of Algiers. Policemen have also been found with their throats cut, and a police officer was murdered in his automobile at the same time as his young child.

These attacks are officially attributed to extremist Islamists of the "Hijra wa takfir" organization formed by veterans of the war in Afghanistan and known for the speed with which they take action.

Those responsible for the murders operate in groups of two or three persons and attack police agents working alone in particular. They use private automobiles and motorcycles and, according to official reports, are lightly armed with knives, revolvers, rifles, etc.

However, according to other sources they reportedly also have heavier weapons, stolen from Army barracks, gendarmerie posts, and the police. A few days ago, near Algiers, the security forces intercepted an automobile carrying a large quantity of light weapons, apparently stolen from a nearby barracks.

Links Between Fundamentalist Groups Suggested

92AF0647A Algiers HEBDO LIBERE in French
11-17 Mar 92 p 7

[Article by K. Ben: "Terrorism: The Smoldering Fire"; boldface words as published]

[Text] El-Bahaiya...extreme schism, a distant, degenerate offshoot of Shi'ism. Except for a handful of zealots and scholars of the 63 sects that have existed at one time or another under the umbrella of Islam, few know of the existence of this esoteric movement of Pakistani origin. Ramadan lasts a mere six days; the five daily prayers are not mandatory; murder and drugs are authorized; the Prophet Muhammad is questioned: Those are the more obvious eccentricities of a "school of thought" which, as a dogma, would be laughably absurd were it not for the fact such inept ideas find favor with adults. Such undisguised rantings result in a sinister list of criminal charges, from criminal conspiracy and premeditated murder, to violation of a place of worship, kidnapping, confinement of others against their will, and possession of combat weapons—all of which lead to the scaffold. One finds oneself wondering if the members of the underground organization "Hizballah" (followers of the movement briefly outlined above) should not be in the hands of psychiatrists, rather than the court in Tlemcen where they were tried.

However extreme it may be, the preceding example is nonetheless an indication of the extent to which this gangrenous madness known as terrorism has spread.

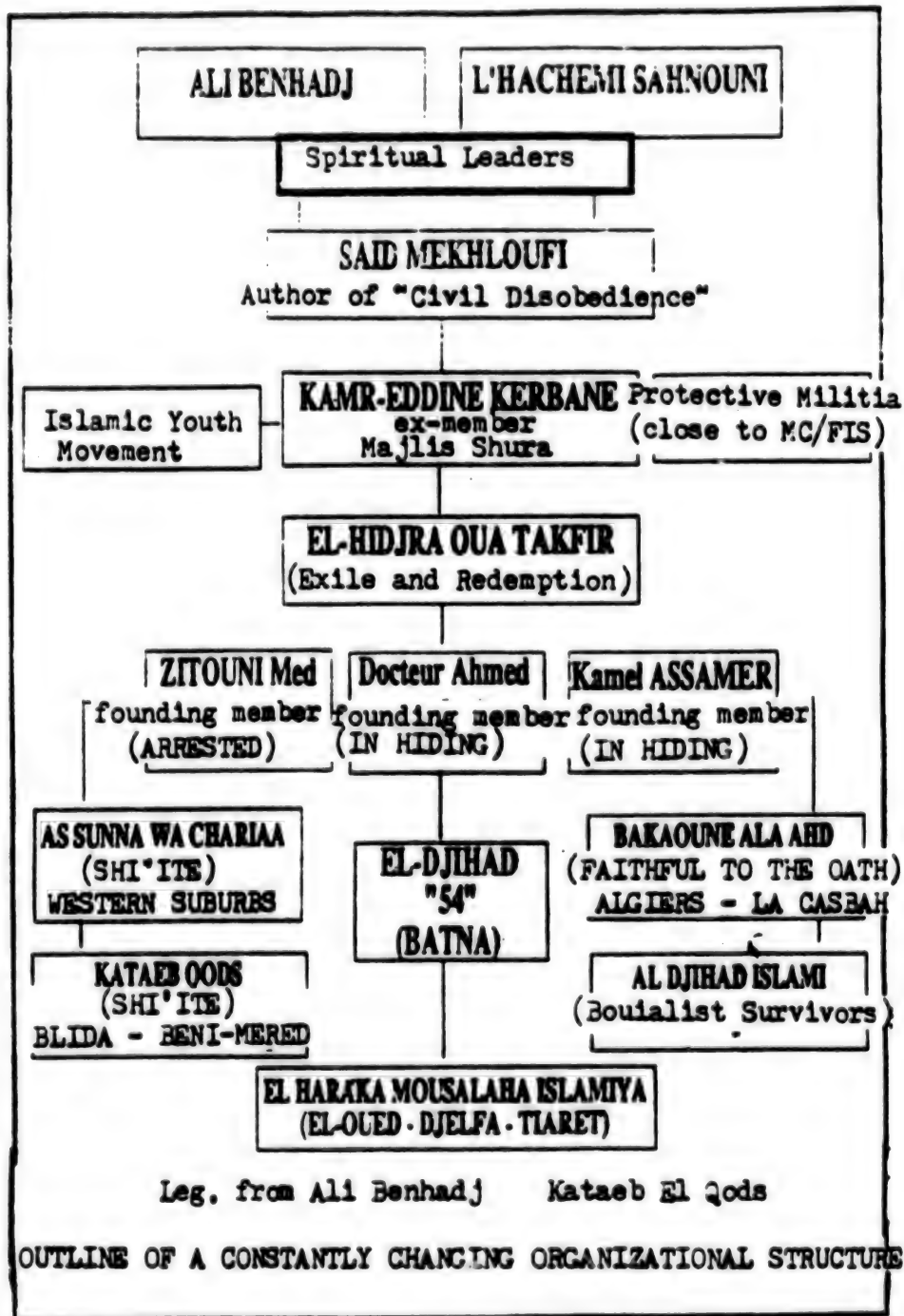
Revelations

"We underestimated them..." said an officer of what is known as the security police. His words are both an avowal and an observation. "They were turned not so much into fanatics as robots—determined, dangerous, and organized..." If there remained any doubts about the existence of a terrorist web within Islam's vast reach, they have been dispelled once and for all by the successive, tragic events that in the past few weeks have made morbid incursions into our daily lives. Our evening news opens with a camera span across the backs of anonymous bodies arrayed in a row or caches of weapons and explosives; an "exclusive" interview is given—granted, extracted, dictated, or ordered?—by a carpenter miraculously transformed into a warlord. None of this is unusual anymore.

But aside from these aspects, the successive arrests are—somewhat parsimoniously—followed by a number of revelations which, when strung together, give us a clearer understanding of this obscure phenomenon. There have been revelations about Hijra oua Takfir (Exile and Redemption)—first of all, a revised date of its founding. The organization is more than two decades old. Its members—who "are neither misled nor strayed from the path of God" and who belong to a "very old school that has existed in several Muslim countries including Egypt" (per Abbassi M. in ALGERIE-ACTUALITE No. 1340 of June 1991)—began making their mark in 1974 and 1975 by distributing anti-Boumediene literature denouncing the "impiety" of the miscreant Algerian society, and advocated the establishment of an Islamic state, believing that it could be done only by taking arms.

El Hijra: The Backbone of the Terrorist Structure

Throughout the 1980's, the organization gained substance and shored up its base. In 1989, after a long period of what is said to be "dormancy," it decided to go into action at a conclave attended by Cheikh Hasnaoui, Khadalache Hacene, Boudoud Messaoud, Achouri Samir, Kadimi Bencheikh, Ait-Abdesselam, Ramdani Hocine, and Bouzraib Mohamed—all devoted to the powerful "Emir" K. Assamer. To set in motion the broad outline of a "jihad" strategically planned by M. Bouzraib and Ait-Abdesselam, "Afghans" were first recruited to monitor and perfect the training of the "fida'is." At that time, ties to "legal" Islamist circles consisted solely of frequent meetings between Kamr-Eddine Kerbane, member of the Majlis Shura of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] (wanted by the authorities since the events of June, now chief administrator for Arab mujahidin in Peshawar!) and Said Mekhloufi (also a member of the council, author of the pamphlet "Civil Disobedience," and now living in asylum in Amman). The chioukh Ali



Benhadj and Hachemi Sahnouni were recognized as impeachable spiritual leaders (until the latter was charged with "apostasy").

And so, beyond the smoke screen of attention-catching sartorial and "folkloric" emblems, Hijra clearly seems to be the backbone of an entire terrorist structure, the central axis around which a multitude of variably small

groups gravitate by virtue of patiently constructed alliances. (Refer to organizational chart.) The Spartan discipline maintained among the "fida'is" (through corporal punishment) partly explains the impenetrable silence that encases the organization whose true importance is very slowly beginning to be grasped day by day. The true activists, ordered to break their family and social bonds, are slowly made to see their lives solely in

terms of the ultimate sacrifice. They gradually become unable to think for themselves, and jihad becomes their sole purpose, the divine quintessence of their deeds.... There is the story of Nora, a young woman of 20 from Kolea, who failed the fourth grade. She was arrested with Zitouni Med (a founding member of Hijra) in the brush near Attatba (Kolea). She served as a liaison and provisions agent.... The insane dream of martyrdom does not discriminate against women.... [as published]

The Calm Before or After the Storm?

Is this the calm before or after the storm? A haunting worry. While the many sweeps conducted by the security police have undeniably and seriously curtailed the potential of Hijra and the small groups associated with it, the members of the police themselves are cautious not to claim victory, and readily admit that there will be a long struggle before the last of the armed groups is permanently dismantled. All the more so because these groups are tempting prey to various foreign entities such as **Qods**, which answers to the Iranian mullahs and is charged with winning the North African fundamentalist networks over to the interests of the regime in Tehran, whose representatives (Tonidi and Monajem) are said to have met with the various group "emirs" in Algiers last January; or the Islamic jihad, **Beit El Qods** (see "Poor Afghans!" by Aissa Khelladi in *HEBDO LIBERE* No. 48). Another is the Lebanese Hizballah led by Shaykh Fadlallah with whom K. Assamer[?text illegible] (who is now said to be in Syria where he once studied) keeps in regular touch. What an imbroglio! As if that were not enough, the recent disbanding of the FIS has complicated matters further: The return to clandestine existence is certain to help smooth over disagreements between two organizations that had a somewhat chaotic relationship, and it will open new horizons, the limits of which cannot yet be determined.

Center Issues Paper on FIS Political Program

92AF0592A Cairo Yafa STUDIES AND RESEARCH
in Arabic 1991 pp 1-41

[Pamphlet by the Yafa Institute for Studies and Research: "The Islamic Revolution in Algeria: The Complete Text of the Islamic Salvation Front's Political Program: Documents and Facts"]

[Text]

A Word from the Publisher: Will There Be an Islamic Revolution in Algeria?

The spark of Islamic protest in the Algerian capital was lit early in June 1991 as a result of a public appeal made to the people by Abbas Madani, the leader of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS]. Incidents and armed clashes pitting army troops and internal security forces against supporters of FIS have been occurring since 5 June 1991 and were still occurring at press time. These incidents

culminated with the arrest of FIS leader Abbas Madani. Mr Madani and his deputy, Ali Belhadj, were arrested and put on trial.

The complete and unabridged version of FIS's doctrine is being presented here to Arab and Muslim readers so we can understand what is happening in Algeria and determine whether or not events in that country will lead to an armed Islamic revolution similar to that which occurred in Iran in 1979. We thought we would present the FIS's recorded political program which goes a long way to reveal the FIS's capability for formulating ideas and mobilizing people. The FIS is a relatively new Islamic movement that emerged on the scene and actually started evolving in 1989.

We thought we would offer Arab readers this service and provide them with this neutral information so they can see for themselves, without distortion or exaggeration, what Algeria's Islamic forces really think and what their politics are. It is our hope that, by providing this service, our publishing firm will be filling a gap in the Islamic Arab library, which lacks materials on one of the most important issues of the Algerian and Arab political scene.

Our aim in this endeavor is to please God. [signed] Yafa Studies and Research

The Complete Text of the Political Program for the Islamic Salvation Front: Introduction

Praise be to God Almighty and may God bless His noble messenger and grant him salvation. And now we turn to our topic.

The Islamic Salvation Front is the front of the proud, high-aiming people of Algeria, who are on the verge of a historic, cultural, message-bearing era. Having been thrust into a political, economic, and social crisis, the people of Algeria are facing obstacles which could undermine their resolve. Their ingenuity is having a marginal impact because they are being misguidedly.

The Algerian people thus find themselves caught between two extremes. Although they have an ambitious, daring will which is combined with a generous ingenuity, they also have restrictions on their freedom. They are being denied the opportunity for well-informed participation in historic, conscientious, message-bearing and cultural activity. Consequently, a process of change is required to get them out of the crisis into which they have been thrust, and to enable them to overcome all the difficult implications of that crisis. That change, which would affect all areas, would be carried out in a well-informed, systematic manner.

Because they are aware of the fact that they had to be free to regain their standing among the most civilized nations and recapture their historic value as one of the best nations that were ever created, the people of Algeria took enormous strides and managed to achieve their independence. They rebelled throughout the period during which their country was colonized, and they continued to rebel until the revolution of November 1954 broke out. Although this revolution restored the country to the people of Algeria, it did not restore to them their freedom. That is why they rebelled in October 1988,

rising like a giant, seeking to realize the hopes to which they had been aspiring. Their action, which was rational and systematic; and their effort, which was wise and well-informed, represented their wishes, gave shape to their ingenuity, and proved their worth.

That is why FIS took upon itself the task of drafting a practical, systematic plan, by means of which new situations could be confronted with vigilance. That plan had to be able to deal with events and it had to conform to the people's wishes. The plan had to provide the psychological, legal, scientific, and technical conditions for dealing with new situations, and that had to be done in the following steps:

- Defining the problems, with their various implications for politics, economics, society, culture, and norms;
- Selecting the best solutions to these problems, while taking into account shari'ah [Islamic law], the psyche of the Algerian people, and all the possibilities for a measured application of solutions;
- Defining, in a systematic manner, the stages for achieving the measured plan to implement solutions on time and in accordance with the terms that have been outlined.

Because the first systematic, measured steps consisted of forming a committee to draft the plan, the FIS's founding board set up such a committee and the FIS's National Advisory Council, thank God, discussed and enriched the plan. Consequently, the plan that was drafted was one that pointed the way to a rational, systematic approach to dealing with problems and finding solutions for them. But the FIS's program, unlike the programs of traditional political parties, is not finalized as soon as its members come to an agreement. Because it is a people's front, the FIS thought that its plan had to be presented to the people, so they could talk about it and participate in the process of enriching it. Thus, they can acquire the required level of political awareness and develop the serious, systematic action that stems from their own ingenuity. The people of Algeria are people who rely on their will and depend on the actions they take in an comprehensive effort that is organized and coordinated with precision. They are people who have a strong, collective conviction. That is why presenting the FIS's political plan to all segments of the Algerian people for a discussion that would be conducted freely was one of the essential systematic stages, which the FIS went through to determine what the steps of that plan would be.

O Muslim people of Algeria: What was being held in trust for you has now been returned to you. The responsibility is now yours, and you will have to answer to God, to history, and to future generations. Use your remarkable ingenuity and your sincere good will to tackle that responsibility. Always be vigilant, circumspect, and undaunted.

O Muslim people of Algeria: Hold on to your pious ways, cling to your historic mission, and stand tall.

"Allah has power to grant them victory; Allah is Powerful and Mighty" [Koran 22:44].

Preface

There are contradictions in the country on all levels. The people, who are ambitious, want to improve their lot and to reach those levels which shari'ah says they should aim for. They want their political, economic, social, and educational systems to rise to the level of the Islamic model set by the Koran and the sunna [prophetic tradition]. They want these systems to function in an Islamic, cultural context so they can confront the new issues of the cultural crisis. Meanwhile, the ruling regime has remained unable to confront basic issues stemming from the political, economic, social, and cultural crisis. Consequently, a sense of loss and confusion has beset the country, and that was very disconcerting to the people. Those who found this most disconcerting were the young.

Accordingly, the call [da'wah] of Islam assumed the responsibility of giving guidance to the people of Algeria and steering them toward the proper course of righteousness. Such a course would preclude the aforementioned dangers, guarantee the salvation of the people, and realize for them the aims of the Islamic awakening which the nation continues to hope it can achieve.

Besieged by domestic and outside pressures hostile to Islam and to the Algerian people, the call of Islam continued to shine its radiant light on people's minds, giving them proper guidance, nurturing them spiritually with the moral precepts which abound in the Koran and the sunna, bolstering their will to do good, and enlarging their effective capacity for faith. The Algerian people thus found the strength to confront disasters and fight modern colonialism, just as they found the power to fight its predecessor, old colonialism, in the past.

Having tried various modern ideologies, Eastern as well as Western, and finding them to be unquestionably bankrupt, the Algerian people found themselves with only one course of action: using their true religion to salvage their historic, cultural, message-bearing gains, and to save their human and natural resources. This was to be done without delay, since time had become one of the most important factors in the success of the comprehensive reform plan.

To bring about the success of the reform plan, it was imperative that there be an organization which could accommodate all demands and needs. Such an organization had to be up to dealing with the new issue of the crisis; it had to be able to utilize all or most of the country's capabilities and resources and come up with solutions capable of addressing requirements for universal improvement and for a genuine recovery. Such an organization would muster a generation's ingenuity and intelligence for the purposes of the reform plan. It would

allow the experiences of that generation to grow, and it would ensure the propriety of its conduct so that it would be up to the task of spreading the message and working seriously and creatively in all walks of life and in all areas of culture. That is why the FIS was founded. It was a historic response to a situation. The FIS's appearance on the scene was assisted by the faithful disposition of the Algerian people, yearning for the glory of Islam, the justice of shari'ah, and the guidance of moral values which are found in the Koran and the sunna. The FIS was founded to follow the example set by God's messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation. It was founded to follow the example set by the generations of the prophet's companions and followers, and it was founded to carry on the mission.

FIS Characteristics

The FIS characteristics may be outlined as follows:

1. The FIS works for the unity of the Islamic rank, and it safeguards the unity of the Islamic nation [ummah]. God Almighty did say, "Your religion is but one religion and I am your only Lord. Therefore serve me." [Koran 21:92]. According to al-Bukhari, the prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "Believers support and reinforce each other just as parts of a building do."
2. The FIS is offering a complete and comprehensive Islamic alternative—as outlined in the Koran and the sunna—to all the ideological, political, economic, and social difficulties. In doing so, it is taking into account all the psychological and cultural implications of the psychological, social, geographic, and natural conditions which are time-specific. God Almighty said, "He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will be one of the lost" [Koran 3:85]. God Almighty did also say, "This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you. I have chosen Islam to be your faith" [Koran 5:3]. And this is what the messenger did say, may God bless him and grant him salvation: "My legacy to you is God's Book and my tradition. If you adhere to them, you will not stray."
3. A moderate methodology is one of the FIS's characteristics, because God Almighty said, "We have made you a just nation" [Koran 2:143]. That is also why the FIS employs an inclusive, middle-of-the road approach. The messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, told some of his companions, "Make things easy for people, not more difficult; do not alienate them; yield to their wishes and do not disagree with them."
4. Among the advantages of the moderation that FIS practices is its approach to combining its calls for action with its declarations for struggle. The FIS does that without exceeding proper bounds either way. God Almighty said, "Had Allah not defeated some by the might of others, the earth would have been utterly corrupted" [Koran 2:251]. The messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "There is one

faction in my nation that continues to uphold the truth, and that faction is not hurt by those who disagree with it or those who fail it." The FIS appeals to people so it can reason with them. God Almighty said, "Nor do we punish a nation until We have sent forth an apostle to warn them" [Koran 17:15], and He also said, "Nor will Allah lead men astray after He has given them guidance until He has made plain to them all that they should avoid" [Koran 9:115].

A declaration of struggle is used to guarantee the nation's interests, to maintain it on a course of righteousness, and to safeguard its gains. 'Umar Ibn-al-Khattab said, "How can you enslave people who were born by their mothers to be free?"

5. Collective action is one of the FIS's practical methods of action. The FIS makes good use of the nation's collective effort to realize the nation's collective will. That is how it managed to get rid of the individualistic tendency and the tendency to act impulsively and to improvise. The FIS managed to avoid the unpleasantness of favoritism and involvement in serving personal objectives, and it spurned indifference. God Almighty said, "Help one another in what is good and pious, not in what is wicked and sinful" [Koran 5:2], and He also said, "Let there become of you a nation that shall speak for righteousness, enjoin justice, and forbid evil. Such men shall surely triumph" [Koran 3:104]. God Almighty said, "David, we have made you master in the land. Rule with justice among men and do not yield to lust, lest it should turn you away from Allah's path" [Koran 38:26]. The messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "Religion means giving advice. 'To whom is this advice to be given, O messenger of God,' we asked. 'It is to be given to Muslims in general and to their religious leaders for the sake of God, His book, and His messenger.'" The messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, also said, "Understand this and put yourself in God's hands."

6. The FIS's functions include: encouraging the spirit of taking initiative; putting intelligence and ingenuity to work; and building good will in the political, economic, social, educational, and cultural organization.

7. Salvaging the cultural, historic message in its entirety is one of the FIS's characteristics. Its model in that respect is the messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him salvation, and the savior of mankind. God Almighty said, "He delivered you from the abyss of fire when you were on the very brink of it" [Koran 3:103].

To achieve that objective, the FIS's plan has been outlined in general, yet brief, terms, in the Political Program. That plan rests on focal points which the FIS is submitting to the Islamic nation so that sweeping change can take place in the context of an Islamic solution.

Elements of the Plan

- Elements of the program;
- Laying the groundwork;

- The doctrinal framework of Islam;
- Politics;
- Economics;
- The society;
- The culture;
- Media policy;
- The army;
- Foreign policy.

Elements of the Methodology

Methodology guidelines for drafting the learned, political plan are:

- The canonical law
- Knowledge;
- The mental attitude of the Algerian people at the time;
- Considerations for application and conditions for completion;
- The political standard for taking the political appearance into account, provided there is no conflict with previous standards.

The Islamic Salvation Front

Praise be to God. Let us praise Him and seek His assistance and forgiveness. Let us seek His protection from evil thoughts and misdeeds. He who is guided by God shall not stray, and he who is led astray shall not find the right path. I declare that there is no god but Allah and that He is the Only God. I also declare that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Believers, fear God out of true piety and do not depart from this life unless you have become true Muslims.

"Men, have fear of your Lord, who created you from a single soul. From that soul He created its mate, and through them He bestrewed the earth with countless men and women. Fear Allah, in whose name you plead with one another, and honor the mothers who bore you. Allah is ever watching over you" [Koran 4:1].

"Believers, fear Allah and speak the truth. He will bless your works and forgive you your sins. Those who obey Allah and His apostle shall win a great victory" [Koran 33:70].

Now then, no words are more truthful than God's words, and the best guidance is that of Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him salvation. The worst evil lies in what is modern and new: everything that is modern and new is heretical; every heresy leads one astray; and every error that causes one to stray dooms one to hell.

Foreword

Seriousness is one of the most important characteristics of purposeful, Islamic action, which is controlled by the law, by reason, and by what is advantageous. Islamic action does, in fact, take into account the human nature with which it deals. To keep us from straying onto the wrong path, deviating from the right course, becoming

excessively immoderate, or exceeding proper bounds, the main points of the FIS's political action have been dealt with on the basis of the following guidelines:

1. The Islamic scheme and its method of justice, sufficiency, and universality is to be adhered to so we can deal with all pending issues, whose importance varies. God Almighty did say, "And now We have set you on the right path. Follow it and do not yield to the lust of ignorant men" [Koran 45:18].

2. Science and knowledge are to be put to use, and scientific methodology is to be utilized to bring matters under control, to define and analyze problems, to shed light on solutions to those problems, to show how they might be carried out, and to utilize technology and the technological arts to muster the experience and efficiency required for the central elements. Such experience and efficiency are essential conditions for every righteous, proper, and purposeful action. And all that serves to confirm what God Almighty said, "He gives wisdom to whom He will; and he that receives the gift of wisdom is rich indeed" [Koran 2:269]. It also serves to confirm the Almighty's words: "Lord, increase my knowledge" [Koran 20:114].

3. Respect for the Muslim people of Algeria, who are striving for nobility, must be restored. They want to get out of the predicament of colonialism so they can get rid of all forms of backwardness. They want to do that by relying on their faith, on their strong belief in Islam, and on their trust in their Almighty God. It is their faith and their trust in God that are helping them break out of the circle of subordination and the forms of modern colonialism. The focal points of the outline would then become the spheres in which they can express their wishes, nurture their ingenuity, test their experience, and continue their mission.

The stages of the reform plan must be simplified systematically, and the people's disposition is to be taken into account, so that their resolve would not fail them and they would be able to regain their confidence in themselves. The people would regain their confidence in historic periods, whose stages are to be determined in accordance with terms or conditions of capability, realism, and effectiveness. To put it briefly, with God's help, our motivation in doing what we do is the respect we have for our people's feelings and aspirations.

4. To guard against our political scheme remaining nothing more than mere ink on paper, systematic conditions for applying models or alternatives and solutions are to be prepared as a practical political plan. That plan would continue to be an incentive for the FIS, since it would be considered a well-informed political action and an effort which is the product of the collective will of Algerian people of all generations. The plan would continue to be the incentive for action until what is being sought is achieved, with God's help and assistance.

One of the characteristics of the FIS's methodology is that its actions are not isolated from the people. Instead,

its actions are always stemming from the principle of working with the people in every procedural, historic step. What is achieved, therefore, would become the product of people's efforts and their struggle. This was the approach of the prophet's companions, may God be pleased with them. They said, "If you were to take us with you when you set out to cross the sea, we would all cross that sea with you. None of us would stay behind."

5. The FIS's relationships with all organizations, societies, and institutions on the scene, and its attitudes toward them, are to be determined in light of its commitment to adhere to its previous ties. This is to be done in light of the systematic clarity of its doctrinal vision of the Algerian people's politics, economics, society, and culture. That vision is defined in Islamic terms and in terms of the Algerian people's major, constant interests. This is to be done so that improvised positions can be brought to an end; unilateral, personal actions prevented; positions that are lacking in the required political awareness avoided; and the FIS's methodology and law, which are two of its guidelines, adhered to.

It is on this basis that justice, moderation, precision, and the inclusiveness of the focal points of the FIS's political action can be guaranteed. This may be achieved according to the following sequence:

A. The Doctrinal Framework

The Algerian people are Muslims, and they have been Muslims for a long time. Islam is their historic, cultural message. Accordingly, Islam is the doctrinal framework and the ideological factor that controls political action in all walks of life. It remains the most appropriate doctrinal framework for the political plan that has been devised to confront a crisis that is sweeping the world and sending shock waves throughout Western civilization. That crisis is one of the strongest pieces of evidence proving the inadequacy of the ideologies that regimes and nations have ended up with. Islam is the one ideology that is strong enough to confront the crisis. This is what God Almighty said, "And who has a nobler religion than the man who surrenders himself to Allah, [and] does what is right?" [Koran 4:125]. God Almighty said, "He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will be one of the lost" [Koran 3:85]. The Almighty also said, "Do not depart this life except as men who have submitted to Him" [Koran 2:132].

God Almighty said, "Pronounce judgment among them in accordance with Allah's revelations and do not be led by their desires. Take heed lest they should turn you away from a part of that which Allah has revealed to you" [Koran 5:49].

Policy

The FIS's notion of policy is that of lawful policy which manifests itself in wise management, good coordination, controlled expectations, and flexible dialogue so that justice and truth can be achieved. To the FIS, lawful

policy manifests itself in fair, mandatory rules and in positions that are truly moderate because they are based on persuasion, not coercion, and formulated as a result of choice, not compulsion. "Say: 'Let us have your proof, if what you say be true'" [Koran 2:111]. God Almighty said, "Therefore give warning. Your duty is only to warn them: you are not their keeper" [Koran 88:21]. God Almighty said, "Say: 'This is the truth from your Lord. Let him who will, believe in it, and him who will, deny it'" [Koran 18:29]. The Almighty also said, "Had your Lord pleased, all the people of the earth would have believed in Him. Would you then force faith upon men?" [Koran 10:99]. FIS is committed to consultation [shura] to avoid despotism. God Almighty said, "They conduct their affairs by mutual consent" [Koran 42:38], and He also said, "Take counsel with them in the conduct of affairs" [Koran 3:159]. To rise above the contradictions of a policy of imported ideologies, the FIS's political program is trying to achieve the following:

First, the FIS is striving to put an end to despotism by seeking the people's counsel [shura]. To remove political, economic, and social monopoly, the FIS is adopting the principle of equality and that of equal political, economic, and social opportunity. To avoid the suppression of public liberties and give all people in all walks of life equal access, the FIS is striving to open its doors to the nation's talents and to listen to everybody's wishes. The FIS is striving to give all people, in all walks of life, equal access to these opportunities. To get rid of a policy of deprivation, the FIS is striving to set standards of responsibility. To guarantee integrity and performance, the FIS is encouraging the spirit of teamwork, and it is trying to put an end to selfishness, favoritism, and individual disputes. To avoid such pitfalls, the FIS guarantees freedom of speech, encourages self-criticism, and determines methods for conducting administrative, political, and economic audits in all institutions and agencies. The FIS is informing the people and giving them, in that regard, a sense of responsibility. It is also reviving the Islamic system of reckoning, and it is applying, within the boundaries of the law, a system by which officials can be questioned about the source of their wealth.

Second, to achieve this, the FIS will be compelled or required to take action to correct the political system. It would start with the following areas:

A. Political legislations are to be subject to the provisions of the shari'ah. This is due to the fact that God Almighty said, "Have they idols which in the practice of their faith have made lawful to them what Allah has not allowed?" [Koran 42:21]. The Almighty also said, "Is it pagan laws that they wish to be judged by? Who is a better judge than Allah for men whose faith is firm?" [Koran 5:50]. In striving to make political legislations subject to the provisions of the shari'ah, the new conditions accompanying party pluralism are to be taken into account, so that each party can make its contribution to reform. That includes the National Council and all administrative and [local] communal councils. Thus, all

parties and all councils would be based on shari'ah, which the Muslim people of Algeria are adopting out of conviction.

B. The executive apparatus is to be reformed. This includes the presidency, the cabinet, the governorate, the *daira* [the second-order administrative division], and the commune.

C. The military establishment is to be reformed and upgraded so that it can protect the country and citizens from any danger that might infringe upon the country's sovereignty; the people's liberties, rights, and responsibilities; and the nation's supreme interests.

D. Security policy is to be reformed, and all forms of oppression or tyranny are to be removed from it. The country's security policy is to be used to serve the nation's interests in light of its mission and in the context of its liberties, which are sanctioned by law. To guarantee justice, stability, and peace, the functions of all administrative departments and institutions are to be defined.

E. The institution of the media is to be reformed. Media organizations are to be utilized in accordance with the requirements of their cultural and educational mission and the terms of their cultural revival. This is to be done with a political awareness that is cultural and educational, to spare the country from cultural subordination and to safeguard it from the cultural invasion which continues to target it.

F. The economic establishment is to be reformed politically, economically, culturally, and functionally. The purpose of this reform is to reconsider the policy on energy and fuel and the policy on exporting minerals and all resources.

G. The domestic trade policy and the foreign trade policy are to be reformed so that monopoly, usury, bribery, waste, and destruction can be brought to an end.

H. The administrative establishment is to be reformed so that tasks can be facilitated, the course of work can be guaranteed, rights can be secured, and, as it has been said, red tape can be removed.

I. The agricultural policy is to be reconsidered by guaranteeing subsidies for farmers. The functional relationship between agriculture and the processing industry is to be guaranteed so that self-sufficiency and appropriate exports to both domestic and foreign markets can be guaranteed.

J. The educational establishment is to be reformed to limit the number of drop-outs, to accommodate students of all ages, and to guarantee their right to achieve the best and highest levels of learning or education to which they aspire. Thus, in addition to becoming the true heirs of their civilization, they can become contributors to it. They can convey the message of their civilization to others, and they can work for its survival and its continued improvement.

The total reform of the political system can thus take place by reforming all systems and all their structures and institutions. Such reform is part of the solution which represents the policy of change as defined by the FIS.

K. The judicial establishment is to be reformed by restoring respect for the courts' independence and for judges' immunity, as these are defined by Islamic shari'ah. Thus, a climate for divine justice, unblemished by injustice and untarnished by dishonor, can be provided. Justice is, after all, the basis of the lawful policy, the *raison d'être* for government, and the aim of the political system.

L. To guarantee the nation its freedom and its right to express its wishes in ways that are most proper and sound, legally and according to the shari'ah, the elections law is to be reconsidered. Competent persons who are of age are the only ones who should vote, and the simple-minded, the people who are underage, and those who lost their legal status should not be allowed to vote. No one should be forced to vote, whether he is serving in the military or in any security, administrative, or other capacity. All people should vote freely for their candidates.

Ballot boxes are to be duly safeguarded in accordance with guidelines set by the courts of law. They are not to be placed in front of anyone but fair-minded witnesses who are known to all people for their integrity. Ballot-counting methods are to be organized, and ballot results are to be compiled and reported to the public, nationwide and worldwide, to guarantee their legality. There should be no doubts about the authenticity of the ballots and the fact that they have not been falsified in any way. Observers representing authorized agencies are to attend this process, and the right to challenge election results in the courts is to be guaranteed.

In addition, the methods by which a person can rightfully declare himself a candidate are to be determined. The nation would thus be fairly and appropriately represented, and that would be an indication that people are actively participating in running the country's affairs by choosing their legal representatives in various councils and in various legislative, executive, political, and other organizations.

C. The Economic Policy Perspective

The FIS's economic policy is based on the notion that harmony should be guaranteed between essential consumer needs and production conditions. It is also based on integrating quality and quantity, and on taking into account the growing need for both quality and quantity, given population growth and urban development. The FIS's economic policy is based on an effort to achieve economic independence, to balance exports and imports, and to protect the country from inflation and indebtedness. These are the two most serious antagonistic conditions that we are facing in our effort to work hard to achieve an honorable life. We are working hard to put an end to the country's economic, political, and cultural subordination and to the plunder of its resources, which

has been going on throughout 125 years of colonialism. The FIS is working hard to put an end to the sense of loss to which the country was subjected during the previous regimes. These regimes dragged the country into an economic crisis, during which it became impossible to strike a balance between consumption and production, even in the most essential areas like medicine and housing. Thus, consumption rose, production fell, the need to import consumer goods grew, and the country became increasingly more subordinate economically.

The country was subjected to a policy that restricted liberties and put an end to the spirit of initiative under the pretext of making plans. Delayed development plans and the backwardness of the educational system were two other pretexts that were used to justify the policy of restricting liberties. As a result of that, the country's human resources were lost and marginalized, achievement standards declined, experts became plain and guileless, production projects were delayed, and small industrial institutions were banned. The number of jobs declined, the number of unemployed people grew, and unemployment rose. Consequently, inflations rose and so did economic contradictions. That caused the present regime to lose control over the conditions of a deteriorating economy.

The industrialization policy started with large industrial complexes and factories that rely on imported, primary and manufactured materials. These factories relied on borrowed top-level experts: they did not produce an adequate quantity of goods, and the quality of the goods they produced was less than adequate. That was the policy which drove this country into dangerous economic bankruptcy. Unless industry is based on the notion of self-sufficiency in operations, consumption, or manufacturing, that industry will only impoverish us further and make us more subordinate. That is why industry in our country is burdensome for the economy. Previously, its *raison d'être* had been making the country self-sufficient and putting young people and experts to work. In addition to the foregoing, factories in our country were poorly run and marketing was neglected.

Investing is one of the most important practical tools which can be used to apply a comprehensive political development plan, especially if this plan is applied to a nation whose population is growing rapidly. One-third of the Algerian people are under age 30. If the economic policy cannot dedicate enough finances in the state budget for making the kinds of investments that would meet future needs and make preparations on various levels that would make it possible to create jobs, the situation will become so dangerous that, for generations to come, the nation will fear the future. That future will threaten them with unemployment and poverty, both of which would relegate their cultural significance to the sidelines.

For all these reasons, political-economic efforts are summarized in the following points:

- A rational agricultural policy is to be drafted

- The present industrialization policy is to be reconsidered to make its returns more appropriate for what is required.
- The trade structure is to be reconsidered. That includes consumer policy, the marketing system, methods of distribution, and other such matters.
- The fiscal and monetary policy is to be reconsidered to ensure the independence of political decisions domestically and abroad.

Islam is the basis for the actions taken by the FIS to save man and civilization. In taking those actions, whether it is considering production, consumption, consumer investment, or a more general investment in the culture, the FIS regards the economy as nothing more than a factor, whose purpose is to serve mankind and improve his lot so that he can achieve the happiness to which he aspires in this life and the next. The FIS regards the economy as a factor with historic, functional, and cultural implications. It is from this doctrinal and ideological economic premise that the FIS deals with the following points in an Islamic economic model. That model applies to all areas of life, such as agriculture, industry, trade, fiscal policy, and the general development plan.

1. Agriculture

Because God gave the country a large area of land, a moderate climate, and a varied topography, agriculture is one of its most important resources. In addition, the Algerian citizen is bonded to the land by nature, and his attachment to it is both psychological and organic. That is why the quality and quantity of the Algerian farmer's production have helped him become one of the most successful farmers. Agriculture enabled Algerian farmers to earn a great deal for the country. It is Algerian farmers who made their country famous for the products it exports to the world's most famous consumer markets. Algerian farmers did that with the land which has been reclaimed and put to use in the northern strip of the country, and in the fertile land on the higher elevations in the country's heartland. And yet, the fact that there are higher elevations and arable desert land that have not yet been reclaimed, because the country does not have a well-informed irrigation policy, has led to the country's failure to make good use of the rainfall which God gave it. Groundwater is not being extracted, and water from river valleys and rivers is being wasted as it flows into sand in the middle of the desert and into the sea to the north.

The agricultural policy left the land without those who can farm it, and it wasted the nation's and the country's time. Dams were not completed, and water resources were not diverted to where they were needed. This agricultural policy dragged the country into a state of agricultural backwardness that was unknown in either its ancient or its modern history.

The wealth of the country's aforementioned natural resources depends upon a rational policy which would

prepare major projects so that water and land can be reclaimed and utilized in the best possible way. This can be done by using suitable and efficient scientific methods and technologies which, could utilize the rainfall in the north to irrigate the desert and enrich northern markets with the grains that would be grown there. Once the diverse qualities of nature complement each other, why wouldn't the country's production policy complement consumer needs and the needs of world markets? When the agricultural product becomes a quality product, plans to make it attain excellence in world markets become stronger.

With God's assistance and with the success He will bestow upon us, the FIS's political efforts in the area of agriculture can be summarized by listing the following measures:

A. The agricultural policy is to be formulated as part of the just, legal policy so that the forcible seizure of land from its owners can be curbed. The use of feudal methods in the process of distributing land must also be curbed. The messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "He who deals unfairly with one inch of land, God will see to it that he suffer the same injustice seven-fold." This was related by al-Bukhari and by Muslims who had heard it from 'Aishah.

B. Land reclamation is to be undertaken seriously by using professional, technological methods. Land is to be distributed legally to deserving farmers without favoritism or preferential treatment, and that process is to be carried out without tyranny and injustice. This means the distribution of land is to be fair according to standards to be defined in the context of canonical law.

C. Care is to be given to raising livestock so that the country can forgo importing meat and dairy products as soon as possible.

D. The distribution and marketing policy domestically and abroad is to be reconsidered.

E. Agriculture and the processing industry are to be strengthened, and use of small and medium-sized [agricultural] implements in production is to be encouraged according to the needs of agriculture, so that crops would not be damaged.

F. Large warehouses for storing agricultural products are to be built as a precaution. This is to be done to guard against crises, wars, and blight.

G. An agricultural plan that guarantees [the country's] interests is to be drafted so that future needs would not be met at the expense of present needs, or vice versa.

A policy which does not take into account lean years during years of plenty is a blind policy that lacks wisdom. God Almighty said, "You shall sow for seven consecutive years. Leave in the ear the corn you reap, except a little which you may eat" [Koran 12:47].

H. Centers for scientific agricultural research are to be established on model farms so that agricultural science and technology may be developed.

I. The Algerian citizen's self-confidence is to be restored, and agricultural education institutions are to be reformed to help him upgrade his agricultural expertise. This is to be done in accordance with the highest technical and agricultural expertise, which the country needs. If these support mechanisms are inadequate, they are to be reinforced, enriched, and supported in a manner that would enable them to bring about the desired outcome.

J. An industrial-agricultural plan is to be drafted so that agricultural equipment in our country can be developed. Agriculture in our country could then achieve the standard of peaceful, technological development which the countries that are competing with us in markets worldwide have achieved. This is because the quality of production is tied to the quality of the technology and its standard of excellence. Instead of marketing them abroad, products are to be marketed in the country so that local national needs can be met. Trade should not be conducted at the expense of agriculture.

In determining basic factors which have either a negative or a positive influence on the field of agriculture, the FIS is merely seeking this information. The FIS realizes that the Algerian people have repented and that their penitence is manifested in their heartfelt desire to return to Islam. Thus, God Almighty has the power to bestow His blessings and His gifts upon us. God Almighty said, "Had the people of those cities believed and kept from evil, We would have showered upon them the riches of heaven and earth" [Koran 7:96]. God also said, "I created mankind and the jinn in order that they might worship Me. I demand no livelihood of them, nor do I ask that they should feed Me" [Koran 51:56]. And yet, this does not justify the indifference and the lack of seriousness which manifests itself in the failure to provide the reasons behind the messenger's statement. The messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said: "Understand the problem, and having placed yourself in God's hands, proceed."

2. Industry

People who aspire to put an end to their subordination regard industry as one of the essential conditions for their country's cultural awakening. These people are instructed by their religion to make preparations and to summon the required force, whose standard of effectiveness would make it capable of carrying out the universal, cultural task at hand. God Almighty said, "Muster against them all the men and cavalry at your disposal" [Koran 8:60].

Although the FIS finds industry an important activity, it does not think it should be carried out at the expense of agriculture, as was the case in the past. Quite the contrary, industry should support and supplement agriculture. Industrial activity should not be carried out at

the expense of Muslims. Industry should not undermine a Muslim citizen's worth, self-esteem, and standing, as is the case in capitalist countries like America and elsewhere, or in communist countries like Russia and other countries like it. Instead, industry should serve man, the maker of his own universal civilization, a civilization that, praise be to God and His messenger, has an equal effect on peaceful endeavors and on military essentials as well. The latter are required to protect the nation's defenses and safeguard truth and liberties in the world.

The industrial policy may be summarized in the following points:

1. The forces of industrial production in Algeria are to complement and supplement each other, as well as other forces of production.

2. More jobs must be created so that the problems of unemployment can be confronted. Small and medium-size plants are to be encouraged, but they are to be utilized in a way that would enable them to meet the country's consumer needs without the need for foreign primary materials, since that would be inconsistent with the principle of economic independence. In other words, an integrated industry where production and manufacturing complement each other is to be set up, provided that quality is not sacrificed in the process.

3. The functional diversity of manufacturing firms and institutions is to be encouraged, so that industry in our country can become self-sufficient. Like links in a tightly-connected chain, each manufacturing institution would complement and supplement another one. These institutions would coordinate their functions and balance their production. Their means of production would respond by producing goods in quantities which would meet the country's needs and spare it the humiliation of looking abroad to meet those needs.

4. Technological expertise is to be developed by raising the standards of industrial education institutions—institutes, universities, and research centers—so they can meet the country's need for an industrial revival.

5. The fact that the country's natural resources necessitate a manufacturing industry which can adjust to industrial innovations and technological development has to be taken into account. Signs of that can be seen in the civilized world in the arms race, in the marketing race, and in the consumer race.

6. Model laboratories for scientific and technological research are to be established. These laboratories are to prepare highly-qualified and exceptionally gifted scientists and technicians to specialize in specific fields of science or technology, especially the manufacturing sciences or related disciplines such as physics, mathematics, chemistry, and all forms of engineering, architecture, and space engineering. These laboratories are to encourage people with intelligence, ingenuity, and strong inclinations and capabilities to excel and to create.

7. How industrial institutions are run is one of the most important factors of industrial growth. And yet, the Islamic way of running these institutions requires that a collective spirit prevail in them. This means that all those who work in an institution are to accept each other's counsel, respect each other, and feel a sense of responsibility. This is in line with what the messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said: "Each one of you is his brother's keeper and therefore responsible for him."

8. Respect for workers is to be restored. Workers' feelings are to be taken into account; their rights are to be guaranteed; and conditions for their psychological, physical, and social well-being and their safety are to be provided. Workers are to be considered for promotions, compensation, incentives, housing, and all other requirements for a decent life are to be provided. The messenger of God said, "Pay workers their wages before the sweat of their brow is dry." He also said, "He who spends his days engaged in tiring work is absolved of his sins by the time he goes to bed."

9. The customs policy is to be reconsidered so that the unity of the Arab Maghreb can be achieved. A Arab and Islamic common market is to be established so that we can be free of the traditional siege which is set by customs and which has become an impediment to the essential functional exchange of agricultural and industrial products. Customs fees impede the exchange of business interests and the integration of human and natural resources, capabilities, and energies on a broader scale throughout the Islamic countries. The customs policy should be reconsidered so we would no longer be in the position of having to accept harassment by wealthy, producing countries. Libya was subjected to such harassment because of the American position, and the same thing happened to Turkish Cyprus and to Iranian oil. This proves that economic integration on a broader scale, both in terms of production and consumption, is needed in the Arab Maghreb and in the Arab and Islamic worlds as well. And to enhance the policy of African unity further, we should not forget to open our doors to our African neighbors.

10. Management institutions that can extend financial credit are to be established so they can sponsor industrial initiatives which would conduct research and become engaged in exploration, renovation, and development activities in the various fields of industry and technology. Doing business domestically and abroad is to be made easier by lifting customs barriers that lie in the way of these initiatives; by reducing the indirect taxes which projects have to pay; or by exempting projects from such indirect taxes altogether.

11. The policy of public ownership is to be reconsidered to protect public property from falling into foreign hands or into the hands of those who hold positions of favor. This is what Almighty God said about property: "...they shall not become the property of the rich among you" [Koran 59:7].

12. Standards that determine the areas in which the state may interfere in matters of industrial ownership are to be set. Private sector initiative is to be protected, provided that the private sector does not turn into a monopoly; does not infringe upon the interests of the public; and does not become an economic, political, and social dependent.

13. Standards that safeguard product quality and protect consumers' rights are to be set.

The FIS will always strive to monitor and renew this policy, and it will do so, with God's assistance and with the success which He will grant it, in accordance with new developments and the demands made by the production process and by consumers. The FIS would thus know, in the context of its general, legal Islamic policy, how many goals and objectives have been achieved and how many needs have been met. Industry would thus become responsive to the other components of the integrated political program, and the FIS would be able to discover, during application, the impediments and obstacles which appear on the scene. It would then be able to remedy the situation and realize the general development plan on time and on the spot, with the scientific, political, and legal precision which the FIS has been pursuing.

3. Trade

As the FIS sees it, trade is the lifeblood of the economy. Production serves the interest of trade, by which wealth is directed and interests are integrated. It is thanks to trade that the kind of balance which leads to setting material values in the context of Islamic shari'ah and mutual interests is established. Thus, producers' interests would not be served at the expense of consumers, and consumers' interests would not be served at the expense of producers. Sellers would not realize profit at the customers' expense, nor would customers profit at the sellers' expense. God Almighty said, "Give just weight and measure and do not defraud others of their possessions" [Koran 7:85]. God's messenger said, "No harm done and none received." To achieve these objectives, trade is to be regulated pursuant to the FIS's policy, in accordance with the following methods:

1. The business establishment is to be reformed by removing monopoly, usury, brokers, and all forms of economic dependency such as cheating, weight fraud, and flim-flam operations. The messenger of God said, "He who cheats us is not one of us."

2. Distribution is to be reorganized, and an effort is to be made to decentralize institutions.

3. The marketing policy is to be changed so that decentralization can be achieved. The black market is to be wiped out; competition and abundance are to be encouraged; what is essential to meet the demand for basic needs is to be provided or made easier; and priority is to be given to the domestic market over foreign markets when national products are being distributed.

4. The pricing policy is to be reconsidered to resist high prices and inflation in accordance with the rule, "No harm done and none received."

5. Buying and selling are to be reconciled in accordance with the provisions of Islamic shari'ah, so that interests can be guaranteed and values preserved.

6. Respect for the system of joint stock companies is to be restored. The emergence of free, commercial firms is to be encouraged to stimulate the economy, to make distribution methods easier, and to achieve abundance.

7. Respect for statutory and juristic procedural guidelines is to be restored so that commercial contracts can be drafted, corporations formed, and business conducted on all levels in a manner that safeguards interests and ensures those rights which justify duties.

8. Media agencies and economic and commercial institutions are to be established to assist merchants, producers, and consumers in their efforts to learn about distribution centers for goods and consumer products, and find out how these goods and products may be acquired. The purpose of this service is to facilitate trade between consumers and producers. Each person would thus be able to meet his needs according to his own standard and ability.

9. An economic, technical, administrative reception agency is to be established to supervise these institutions.

10. A foreign trade policy is to be drafted based on requirements for maintaining and protecting an independent economy. The following conditions must be met:

- Foreign trade is to be regulated according to domestic needs and the availability of goods. Thus, goods would not be marketed abroad at the expense of the domestic market, or at the expense of producers and consumers.
- Trade monopolies are to be prohibited, except in those cases where the state must maintain a monopoly in order to guarantee higher political interests, higher economics interests, and other interests.
- Gradual progress must be taken into account in bringing about free trade, in order to preserve the necessary economic balance between exports and imports. During the early stages of this policy, priority is to be given to manufactured materials which are known to be essential for unleashing the nation's creative energies and giving its management the freedom to contribute to a wealth of cultural and purposeful efforts, so they can perform their duty to mankind. An effort to establish peace, in the Islamic sense, is to be made, and an effort to establish justice; to champion the weak nations and states which are being hurt by the policy of colonialism; and to alleviate the heavy burden of backwardness, poverty, hunger, disease, ignorance, and destruction must also be made. These efforts are to be made even if one has to do that in a roundabout way.

- The balance of trade is to be made to yield to the standard of a long-term, urban development plan, so that primary materials for industry and urbanization, such as energy and minerals, would not be turned into consumer materials for immediate consumption. Thus, the FIS's policy would be fair to our grandchildren by taking into account what needs they might have when their time comes. That would sustain the economic and urban revival for future generations.
- A balance between exports and imports of the same quality is to be devised to protect products that are produced nationally. Quality assurance is to be taken into account, and that should lead to state support for local products.
- Goods which are produced for export are considered among the most important elements that give shape to the wishes of the Algerian people. With these goods and their efforts and hard work, the Algerian people can establish themselves and gain the world's confidence with the quality and moderate prices of their products, according to the competition-based requirements of the world market.
- Relations with the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and with all financial and trade agencies involved in the present crisis must be reconsidered. The debt problem is to be brought up in light of the new political, economic, and social developments being set forth by the FIS's policy.

Thus, the FIS's trade policy would complement and supplement its agricultural and industrial policy in the context of an economy that would bring about independence, abundance, and growth, and respond to the requirements of social, cultural, and urban growth.

4. Finance

Monetary policy is one of the most important factors in the systematic manner by which control over the economy is established. By controlling monetary policy, resources can be protected from loss, and growth and prosperity—the two objectives of the FIS's economic policy—can be guaranteed, in accordance with the following methods:

- The value of the currency is to be reconsidered, and its real standard value, domestically and abroad, is to be set. This is to be done according to financial conditions and the terms of trade for exports and imports. This should be done to provide real incentives for production, subject to Islamic legal limitations on monetary policy.
- The process of setting the price of currency domestically and abroad is to be reconsidered to protect citizens' purchasing power domestically and abroad, or to give producers a greater incentive to make an effort and to protect economic values.

To guarantee political decisions domestically and abroad, the state budget shall rely on natural resources, and on agricultural, industrial, and commercial products. The state budget is to rely on the effort to provide

conditions for self-sufficiency; it is not to rely on others; and it is to guarantee fairness.

Accordingly, the following matters are to be reconsidered:

A. The policy on customs taxes is to be reconsidered.

B. As long as the state adheres to a lawful policy, alms and religious endowments are to be considered legitimate sources of revenue for the state.

C. In economic or social crises, a lawful social security and credit fund is to be established. A state that borrows money from its citizens so it can do justice by them is better than one which usurps their funds or one that relies on an inflationary method or on foreign indebtedness.

D. Algerians and all Muslims, including expatriates, who have fortunes abroad are to be encouraged to invest their funds for the purpose of stimulating the national economy and bringing about the required self-sufficiency. This is one of the forms of using money as a tool in the struggle for God's cause. Money can be used for that purpose by lending it, donating it, or investing it. The state should honor and abide by all guarantees to safeguard people's livelihood.

E. The banking policy is to be reconsidered for the purpose of guaranteeing the state's fortunes and the livelihoods of citizens and of all those who make contributions that enrich the country. These people invest in the country to guarantee the country's freedom to make political decisions domestically and abroad.

F. Islamic banks and loan funds are to be established. These institutions shall employ no form of usury, and they shall guarantee the interests of the public by guaranteeing the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, social advancement, and economic growth. The state's budget would be determined annually on that basis, according to the country's immediate and future needs. This determination would be based on criteria guaranteeing gradual improvement and economic growth at the required speed, based on the aspects of new political developments and historical events inside the country and abroad. The budgetary policy should abide by the notion that funds are to be disbursed according to a scale of priorities, which is to be determined according to new developments. Excluded from all this will be alms, which are to be disbursed wisely according to need.

G. The method of collecting revenues is to be amended. That method, which is now overburdening citizens, has become a contributing factor to exorbitant prices, to inflation, and to a policy that is robbing citizens and usurping their wealth in the name of the law and the public interest. It were as though the public interest would be served by hurting citizens and overburdening them. Therefore, this tyranny must be brought to an end, so that the wheel of just growth can be driven forward.

Social Policy

The FIS's social policy stems from the principle of honoring man. On that principle, God Almighty said, "We have bestowed blessings on Adam's children and guided them by land and sea. We have provided them with good things and exalted them above many of Our creatures" [Koran 17:70]. The FIS's social policy starts by guaranteeing those rights and liberties which have been guaranteed by the judicious law. It would bring about a model society for the best nation to be created for mankind, wherein all people would be equal. Such a model is one that is based on a social solidarity that precludes sectarian class conflict.

It follows, then, that the FIS's social policy revolves around the following elements:

A. The Right To Life: Life is one of the dimensions of God's divine blessings to man. Another blessing lies in the fact that man's mission is the reason for his existence. God Almighty said, "I created man and the jinn in order that they might worship Me. I demand no livelihood of them, nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Allah alone is the Munificent Giver, the Mighty One, the Invincible" [Koran 51:56].

Man's reason for being, as indicated by God, is to worship God, not to make money, as indicated by modern theories. These theories, starting with those of Malthus and Marx, regard man as a drone and a sponger. God Almighty underscored the honor He bestowed upon man by placing more weight on the relationship between him and God than on the relationship between him and those creatures which God created to serve man. Almighty God said, "The noblest of you in Allah's sight is he who fears Him most" [Koran 49:13].

If man is being honored by being considered the center of the universe because of his ability to act, that ability for which he is being honored is not the coarse one limited by the boundaries of consumerism. Rather, man is being honored for his universal ability to act in a manner that transcends immediate individual and collective needs, and takes into account the implications of his actions on civilization. In this sense, man is the maker of civilization, and not its minion. That is why everything which has been said to promote birth control infringes upon the dignity of man, demeans his worth, and usurps his place of prominence in the universe. God Almighty said, "... you shall not kill your children because you cannot support them (We provide for you and for them)" [Koran 6:151]. The nation is still being called upon to guarantee equal protection and care for all infants. To deny such care and protection is to infringe on the value of life.

B. The Right to Protection and Care:

The right to be protected and cared for in all stages of one's growth, from the time of conception to the last stages of maturity and the highest levels of learning, is

associated with the value of life, and that life is considered to be cultural, historic, and purposeful. It follows, then, that the right to education is a legitimate right which involves a mother's duty and responsibility to educate her child. Accordingly, education is both one's right and one's duty. God Almighty said, "Recite in the name of your Lord who created, created man from clots of blood!" [Koran 96:1]. The text of the law linked the right to life with the right to learn the substance of the message, and that is a reference to the fact that the message is one of the reasons for being born. Learning, which is the activity that makes one worthy of bearing the message, is a matter of duty, because without it one would not be able to fulfill his duty of bearing the message.

That is why the FIS's policy, pursuant to the principle of equality in Islam, is based on the principle of guaranteeing everyone the right to an education. Therefore, the following conditions are required for reforming the educational system. Reforms would start with the prevailing educational policy which is now involved in all factors of the political, economic, social, and cultural crisis.

Educational Policy

A. If the educational policy is part of the state's policy in general, and if the policy which is being pursued by the FIS is the lawful policy on education and is as binding, just as the aims of Islamic shari'ah in education are legally binding, then it follows that the educational policy must guarantee everyone in the country the right to an education, without any discrimination based on race, sect, ethnicity, religion, or sex.

B. The nation is to be considered entitled to education, just as an individual is entitled to it, because it is necessary that all of the nation's interests be taken into account.

C. The budget for education is to be set in a manner that guarantees both fairness and awareness.

The State Budget for Education

In light of the fact that education is considered one of the most important fields in which one can invest, the state budget for education is to be determined with the aim of balancing educational needs and financing.

Educational Guidance

Educational guidance is to be bound by the following values:

A. The wishes and the expertise on how to attain the highest qualifications.

B. Islamic values, such as not having a coeducational system. Educational guidance is to be bound by a code of conduct and social conventions that must be compatible with legal guidelines.

C. When hiring people, consideration is to be given to the level of the purposeful, cultural task they are to perform. This is an area in which a generation that has been prepared for such a task can contribute. Unemployment can be confronted, and vacancies where jobs have different levels of functional technological complexity can be filled.

D. The testing policy is to be adjusted in accordance with all these implications, so that the number of school dropouts can be reduced and the number of graduates who remain unemployed after completing the formative stage of their education can also be reduced. To avoid what has already happened, new opportunities are to be given to those who are on the street and those who were expelled from institutions of learning. These individuals could be given an opportunity to continue their education by testing them or by some other means. This is to be done to get them involved in the economic, purposeful, and cultural project which has been prepared for them. This can be done by setting up special institutions for them, such as secondary schools and remedial university extension courses for the purpose of guaranteeing their social promotion.

4. The Educational Content, or Curriculum

A. The educational content is to be reconsidered in light of the country's needs for a general revival. Thus, the required educational awareness is to be guaranteed on all levels and in all areas of specialization.

B. The educational content is to be reconsidered, so that obtrusive ideologies and concepts whose values are incompatible with those of the Islamic nation can be deleted. This is to be done to preserve the national character, asserting its authenticity and encouraging the spirit of creativity.

C. Our methods of general education, which tend to reinforce the pitfall of blind imitation, are to be reconsidered. It is our methods of general education that turned our universities into institutions that consume, rather than produce, knowledge. These universities are now turning out apprentices instead of knowledgeable scientists. An Islamic character is to be added to the fields of technological studies, and the highest standards of education are to be guaranteed to those with technological expertise to spare the country the need for foreign experts.

5. Teacher Preparation

The status of those institutions which prepare teachers to teach on all educational levels is to be reconsidered, in order to guarantee that those teachers have the highest levels of experience and represent the best models of conduct. This is because teachers and educators serve as role models, not only for their students, but also for the entire nation. This means that respect for an educator's mission, for his worth, and for his standing in the Islamic nation are to be restored. In doing that, we would be following the example set by the messenger of God, may

God bless him and grant him salvation. It is necessary that respect for teachers be restored in the material sense, and their compensation made commensurate with the momentous duties which they are called upon to perform at this decisive stage of the nation's history. After all, the justification for one's duties lie in one's rights. The more demand there is to compete for this task, the greater its material and moral returns will be.

6. The Social System in Educational Institutions

A. The social system in an educational institution is considered one of the most important factors of education. It shapes the character of pupils and students. Accordingly, the educational community ought to become a proper model for the nation.

B. Psychological, material, and social conditions must be provided in the environment of an educational institution, so that the Islamic character can grow in a well-rounded, integrated manner into one that is physically, psychologically, mentally, culturally, socially, and morally sound.

7. The Educational Ladder: from Kindergarten to Post-University

In light of the new political, economic, and social developments the educational ladder, from [elementary] school to the university, is to be reconsidered. Promotion from one stage to another is to be made subject to educational criteria only. All stages of university education which have not yet been Arabized are to be Arabized.

8. The Mandatory Education Stage

Mandatory education is to be extended to include secondary education.

9. Educational Tools

Textbooks are to be reconsidered, based on the aims of shari'ah and the requirements of Islamic education.

10. The Physical Education System

The policy on physical education is to be reconsidered so that it can become an instrument through which one's body can grow and one's spirit and morals can be nurtured. In reconsidering the policy on physical education, the provisions of shari'ah are to be taken into account.

11. Media Education

All the programs and aims of media education are to be reconsidered, so that media education would no longer be a tool that can be used to invade the nation's cultural ideas. Instead, media education should become an instrument of cultural immunity, of religious conviction, and of professional aptitude by which the ingenuity of generations can take shape, and their ability to be creative and to excel can shine through.

12. Policy on Scholarships Inside the Country and Abroad

The policy on scholarships is to be adjusted so that scholarships would be awarded to those who are most deserving, either because of their aptitude or their need.

13. The Management System for the Policy on Administering Institutions on All Levels

The administrative management policy is to be reconsidered, so that moderation can be observed in centralizing and decentralizing management. The collective spirit is to be adopted, and institutions of education and management are to be combined. This would make both the teacher's and the student's task easier, and it would serve the country's interest.

14. Policy on Hiring Instructors, Administrators, and Research Personnel for Educational Institutions

The policy of hiring administrators, instructors, and research personnel in educational institutions to achieve awareness is to be reconsidered.

C. The Right To Vote, To Run for Office, and To Participate in Running Institutions: Islam is the religion of freedom, given the fact that such freedom is based on responsibility and is an expression of a benevolent will that is knowledgeable and rooted in religious conviction and also in moral and emotional immunity. God Almighty said, "Allah's creation cannot be changed" [Koran 30:30]. The messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "Every infant is born with his own disposition." 'Umar Ibn-al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, said, "Would you enslave those whose mothers bore them to be free?" It is on the basis of this profound Islamic insight into man that man is held to be responsible. In accordance with this responsibility, man is entitled to the following rights:

1. Man has the right to vote or the right to choose his leaders.

2. Man's right to vote entitles him to run for office as long as he meets the following conditions: he must be a Muslim who is fair, and he must set a good example. He must be competent or worthy, and his personal tendencies, psychological disposition, and immediate motivation must be those which are required by the new elements on the scene.

3. Man's right to manage institutions means that he has the right to assume managerial and professional responsibilities, which are based exclusively on piety, aptitude, and conduct. Accordingly, a civil servant or someone who has been entrusted with such responsibilities is accountable to God, to the nation, and to the administration which he was appointed to oversee and whose management was entrusted to him. To guard against the loss which would result from the loss of accountability, God Almighty said, "Allah commands you to hand back your trusts to their rightful owners." [Koran 4:58]. The messenger of God said, "Because all of you are your

brothers' keepers, you are all responsible for those who have been entrusted to you."

4. A person who is in a position of responsibility gains the trust of others if he has the aforementioned qualities of character. The word, trust, is used here in the legal sense and in the professional and political moral sense as well.

D. Lifting Restrictions on Initiative: The restrictions which killed the spirit of initiative in our distinguished people, who have almost reached the point of dangerous indifference, have to be lifted so that the nation can confront new political, economic, cultural, and urban developments. Our people must have the freedom that would open doors to creative and productive initiatives in all areas of life. This is a psychological condition imposed by the nature of the stage for the purpose of preparing future generations for the major tasks which will be expected of them. These tasks have to do with the message, with culture, and with history.

E. Guaranteeing Protection for One's Religion, Life, Mind, Honor, and Possessions: Protecting interests is one of the objectives of Islamic law, and Islam guarantees the five essential elements which are required to achieve that objective. Without these five elements man would not be human. These are: the protection of religion; life; mind; honor; possessions. Protecting these essential elements fulfills a psychological requirement for a sense of stability.

F. Reform of the Algerian family is to take place in the context of Islamic law: No other ancient or modern religion, philosophy, or system has shown as much care for the family as Islam has. This is because the family performs a grave function in society. The care which Islam shows for the family may be summed up in the following:

1. Islam cares for children who have not reached the age of majority.

2. Its guarantee of social solidarity almost becomes preferential treatment.

3. It guarantees social cohesiveness by means of family cohesiveness. Ever since the days of the messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, having families which have these characteristics and perform these functions has been considered one of the most important consequences of the attention which the law gave to families. Although the family has been hurt by the conditions of colonialism, both in its old and modern forms, it did not succumb to colonialist policy. It is because of the family that the Algerian people managed to stand up to their enemies and to rebel against them in the absence of the state. Because the family has been subjected to a policy of torture, disintegration, poverty, and ignorance, reforming it is considered one of the broadest fields of activity for the FIS's policy. That is why FIS is proposing that the following obstacles be removed.

A. Employment is to be provided for heads of families to stop their migration, which has become a factor in the disintegration of the family.

B. The housing policy is to be reconsidered for the purpose of providing decent housing for married couples and preventing homelessness and all the other problems which result from the lack of housing. There is a lack of housing in the country because construction has been prohibited and people's efforts to build to meet their present and future needs, as dictated by the imperative of population growth during a stage of comprehensive growth, are being delayed.

C. Attention is to be given to emigrants, and their return to their country is to be made easy by making available those things whose unavailability caused them to leave the country, swallow the bitter pill of expatriation, and feel the pain and heartache of homesickness.

D. Attention is to be given to mothers, particularly those who have children under their care. When necessary, mothers are to be supported and given aid which would be an investment in those mothers. Mothers are to receive motherhood grants, because their work in the home is considered both a social and an educational service for which they should be compensated at a level that is comparable to that of the wages earned by workers in factories, fields, or elsewhere. In paying mothers such compensation their level of experience, competence, and aptitude with regard to the education they provide in the home is to be taken into account. The task of hiring, supervising, and distributing positions to these mothers shall be carried out by a social security agency, and that agency shall guarantee that these mothers meet all security, moral, and psychological conditions.

E. Attention is to be given to women because Muslim women earned a reputation during the days of the prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation. Believers' mothers, including 'A'ishah, may God be pleased with her, earned a reputation for their learning and became role models for Muslim women. 'A'ishah even reported and narrated more than 2,000 prophetic traditions. The fact that Muslim women joined the prophet in his invasions—consider Umm Salmah's stance in al-Hudaybiyah—is an indication of their political awareness. During the ages of scientific and intellectual revival gifted and brilliant women made contributions to ideas, literature, jurisprudence, politics, and medicine. In many other ages, women risked their lives in the holy wars which were fought in the Maghreb and in Spain. During the occupation of Algeria and the November revolution, Muslim female fighters rose to prominence, thereby reviving the glorious achievements of Muslim women. And now that Muslim women represent more than two-thirds of university and secondary school students, their function at this stage deserves attention. The FIS considers that energy which women represent to be a psychological, social, and cultural factor that deserves attention. It is an energy which should be wisely guided and rationally employed in the general

cultural development plan. This can be done by singling out women and giving them the following attention:

- The standard of women's faith and the quality of the makeup of their conduct is to be upgraded.
- The standard of their political, educational and cultural awareness is to be upgraded.
- Respect for women's standing in Islam is to be restored. They are to be protected from tyranny, corruption, and the disease of blind imitation.
- Society is to be educated and made to realize the importance of women's energies and the greatness of their mission.

That is why Islam was, and still is, the religion that did not discriminate between woman and her brother man. Islam revered, honored, and showed its preference for women in the same way it revered, honored, and showed its preference for men. The messenger of God said, "Women are the brothers of men." He also said, "Be kind to women."

F. The policy of family grants, especially those grants which go to workers or to those whose standard of income falls short of guaranteeing essential food, is to be reconsidered.

G. Retirees' pensions are to be raised. These pensions had been frozen and are now inadequate in view of the inflation in the country. Pensions for widows whose husbands died in wars and for others who are otherwise entitled to them are to be raised.

H. The disabled and the handicapped are to be cared for. The salaries which are set for them are to be compatible with their social standing. These salaries should enable them to preserve their dignity and safeguard them from neglect and from being ignored or abused. The salaries would warm their hearts and give them the feeling that they are being embraced by their nation. It is worth noting that this care is to be given to all those who deserve it and that there be no discrimination in providing such care based on sex, race, sect, or religion.

I. The prison policy and the way prisoners are being treated is to be reconsidered to ensure the dignity of those prisoners. Prisoners are to receive physical, psychological, social, and educational care. They are to receive religious, general, and vocational education, and they are to be prepared to function on the job, in society, and also in the economic and cultural life of the community after their release from prison.

J. A balance is to be established between a salary that would be fitting compensation for the effort and experience that are required to perform certain tasks, and the purchasing power that is required to enable a person to satisfy consumer needs in general.

K. Comprehensive social reform: The system of guardianship in Islam is considered one of the wisest legal methods for regulating relations between people in the

following areas: on the street, at the market, in the factory, in the field, in the administration, and in the mosque.

Order is established by virtue of the fact that a guardianship agency, which is to be appointed by the courts, would oversee these areas. Conditions for harmony would be created; factories would be protected; public morals, values, and character would be safeguarded; and the nation would reach those aims which were set for it by the tolerant laws of Islam.

L. Health Policy

Care for the nation's health is necessary to protect it from disease, from epidemics, and from infirmities which are incompatible with the objectives of a healthy upbringing. Caring for the nation's health would guarantee that generations would be brought up to realize the aims which are expressed in the noble verse from the Koran. God Almighty said, "ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another" [Koran 48:29]. God Almighty also said, "Allah has chosen him to rule over you and made him grow in wisdom and stature" [Koran 3:247], and He also said, "Men who are strong and honest are the best that one can hire" [Koran 28:26]. The messenger, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "A believer who is strong is better and more beloved to God than a believer who is weak. There is goodness in both." The FIS finds it necessary that the following measures be taken to ensure that the sick are cared for and given the proper treatment at the proper time:

1. The standard of awareness about educational health in all institutions such as schools, institutes, universities, mosques, and all the media agencies is to be raised. The nation would thus become fully informed about the diseases that appear in the country and the methods of their treatment. All conditions for good physical health are to be guaranteed: medical specialists are to be made available; reception centers [for patients are to be established]; experts in nursing are to be made available; and first aid is to be offered in the most effective and soundest methods. Good means of transportation are to be made available, even if that means using a designated fleet of helicopters when necessary.

2. Identifying marks are to be placed on the chests of AIDS patients so that people can take precautions. It would be best for people to practice prevention. Anyone who has any contagious disease should avoid contact with others. When necessary that person should wear a mask to prevent the spread of germs to others, especially if that person is a teacher who teaches children, a physician who cares for patients, or a merchant who is mindful of his customers.

3. The hospital system is to be reconsidered to provide the factors that contribute to health, such as physical cleanliness, proper conduct, and the proper performance of tasks. All institutions, including hospitals, health

centers, and other establishments, are to be placed under the supervision of a health official.

4. An integrated health delivery system is to be devised so that free medical care and private medical care can be integrated into one health delivery system that would be fair. Such a system would not treat the poor unfairly, would not relegate experts to the sidelines, and would not underestimate the value of an employee.

5. Pharmaceutical drugs are to be subsidized and made available so that poor people can afford to buy them.

6. Technological devices that are compatible with medical developments are to be made available. More university hospitals and more scientific research centers are to be founded so that self sufficiency in the area of health can be achieved in all branches of medicine. Paramedical centers also are to be established, and that would help create jobs without burdening the economy and slowing down social growth and cultural development.

7. Production methods for pharmaceutical drugs and in research laboratories are to be developed so that the country can have all the drugs it needs. That condition is required for the country's independence and for bringing about an end to its subordination to others.

8. More hospitals are to be built so that all areas of the country would have hospitals.

Culture

The policy on culture, as seen by the FIS, can be summarized by saying that its aim is to protect the nation from cultural invasion and defeat. The FIS's policy would make the nation quite ready for promoting its Islamic culture and civilization, especially [with regard to] the following:

- Religion and shari'ah
- Islamic conduct and values
- Islamic thought and ingenuity
- The freedom to take initiative intelligently, and its enlightening repercussions on the sciences and law.

Islamic culture is the culture in which, in theory as well as in practice, reason complements the law and morals complement art and science. Islamic culture is the experience of a nation, the impulse of its history, the essence of its experience, and the measure of its effectiveness. It is a set of psychological conditions, historical treasures, and future prospects which make up the setting in which generations of creative talents can grow and flourish. It is the secret of survival and the entire reason for the existence of the best nation that was ever created: the nation of Islam, the nation of [Islamic] civilization.

Briefly put, these psychological, historical, and cultural objectives can be realized by guaranteeing the following conditions:

- The nation's mental attitude must be taken into account. This is a nation which deserves to have an

honorable life, a life of effective participation in a cultural effort that would be made on the broadest scale. That can be achieved by giving those who have creative initiatives the freedom they need.

- Respect for the Islamic religion is to be restored. Islam is a way of life that guarantees believers happiness in this life and the next. It is a religion that realizes for believers the aims and justifications of the aforementioned honors which are bestowed upon them.
- Respect for science and scientific technology is to be restored so that both can regain their national standing, the standing that was given to them by the Holy Koran and the sunna. This can be done by restoring to ulema and learned individuals the respect which they deserve as reputable and responsible people. Therefore, no announcements about major national issues are to be made until scholars have been consulted. These announcements are then to be made in light of the wisdom they provide and the guidelines they set, so long as they continue to obey God and His messenger, perform good and constructive deeds, and make matters clear.
- Universal use of the national language throughout the country is to be encouraged. The national language is to be used everywhere, without exception, to guarantee that Algerians understand each other and to safeguard the country's unity. The national language is also the language of the Koran and the sunna. This does not mean, however, that we reject all other languages, since those languages could facilitate interaction with others and enrich cultural relationships.

Culture would thus become an obstacle to the breakup of our unity, and it would protect the nation's cultural defenses from an invasion of ideas and culture. Culture would become the source of our nation's chemical, moral, artistic, scientific, and technological resources. The country could thus guarantee its future generations a prosperous future during which their noble origin could evolve and their refurbished ingenuity could excel. Our people could thus become the bearers of the message and the builders of civilization. To achieve all that, the following matters are to be reconsidered:

- Radio and television programs, the library system, auditoriums, cultural centers, and the theater;
- Artistic and sports complexes and movie theaters;
- Specialized and general scientific magazines are to be encouraged;
- Islamic, scientific, and technical books are to be made available so that libraries can meet the needs of institutes, universities, and research centers.

The FIS's media policy is the field in which the notion of free speech and the nation's right to breathe pure air take shape. The media are the nation's window to the world. They report the news of the world to the nation; they inform the nation about world events; and they convey to it information about the world's latest developments in science, in the body of knowledge, and in technology and the arts. And yet, the restrictions that the nation has

endured denied the people their right to speak freely and to communicate freely with the world so they can experience the world's circumstances, take advantage of its science and technologies, put to work its best activists, benefit from its top experts and geniuses, keep pace with unfolding discoveries, and attain the highest levels of cultural and educational awareness in the world. That would help the nation respond to the world in a productive manner, and would qualify it to take an active part in the efforts that are being made to solve the problems of modern man and tackle the new issues of the age. The nation would thus be able to put an end to the distortion of Islam; the repression of Muslims; and the effort to prevent Muslims from telling others about Islam, defending it, and protecting all Muslim peoples and nations.

Therefore, the FIS finds that its freedom to give expression to its own cultural message is one of its most cherished gains in the current stage. Accordingly, the media are to be considered the lifeblood of the nation's political, economic, cultural, and enculturating life. They open the nation's doors to the world and make our relationship with that world a rich and effective one. The media give the nation nothing but their best, and they do so within the guidelines of their divine mission. They take only what is proper in the sciences and technologies, and they bring into the country only that which is new and suitable for confronting the new needs, which are suitable for the cultural struggle in the nation. They thereby reinforce those impulses that will enable generations of our people to use their ingenuity to achieve the aims of cultural independence. Accordingly, media agencies serve as a filter for experiences, a standard for information, and a magnifying glass by which we can examine the news. The media enrich our body of information, and they report to us the word of God. To achieve that, the FIS is trying to reform the following:

1. It is trying to reform different publications: daily, weekly, and monthly publications, as well as periodicals. The FIS's policy encourages the media to uncover the facts, to investigate them, and to present them objectively to help people understand the country's situation in all fields and to help them understand the world as well. The FIS even goes beyond that when it encourages the press to get rid of its inferiority complex vis-a-vis the foreign media, so it can regain the confidence of all the people with all the different levels of education. A journalist's immunity can thus be guaranteed, and respect for him can be restored because his aforementioned mission is an important one.
2. Members of the press are to be encouraged to specialize when they cover all areas of political, economic, social, and cultural life inside the country or abroad.

The lack of specificity, which dominates the style of journalism in our country, has become one of the gravest factors contributing to the dominance of generalizations, the poor cultural standard, and the destruction of political and cultural awareness. Keeping the Algerian people

ignorant about Islam, and distorting Islam for the purpose of turning people away from it and perverting the religion, constitute the gravest of all the colonialist policies that were perpetrated against Islam during the days of colonialism. That policy is still being practiced today. That is why the FIS is calling the attention of the Algerian people, who are zealously protective of their religion, and telling them that newspapers and publications up to the task of carrying the hitherto idled Islamic message must be established. These publications would set the right course for the people's triumphant awakening. They would shed light on the facts, and they would prove their suitability to save the nation and mankind; to stand up to the nation's enemies; and put an end to the effort to mislead people, give them false information, numb public opinion, and turn that public opinion against Muslims and against Islam. The lack of a free Islamic press on the scene has left a dangerous gap, through which the cultural invasion of the nation became possible. People were given biased instructions to hinder the course of the Islamic revival. Nations had rushed to carry the banner of this revival, and the nation had set out in earnest to realize its hopes after getting rid of its pain and putting an end to the colonialist policy which had left it the victim of its malicious plots and its vindictive objectives.

Those who want to hear songs at all times can find them, and those who want to watch movies can find them too, but those who want to find religious programs so they can learn something about their religion or those who seek an educational program that they can learn from and make use of can find neither. The media have become too narrow, and they have closed their doors to those who are seeking freedom and truth, those who want Islam and Islamic shari'ah, and those who are seeking science and technology.

To avoid these deteriorating conditions, the FIS's policy finds that reform of the media is necessary. Reform would make the media a proper tool for education and an agent of social reform. The media would become a persuasive ideological and intellectual tool and a fascinating forum for literature and the arts. Benevolence would not be sacrificed for aesthetics; truth would not be sacrificed for a news story; and honesty would not be compromised in providing guidance.

3. The Algerian News Agency must be enriched and fortified by the addition of highly-qualified, competent people. The Algerian News Agency must also have the best and the latest technology so it can operate at a level which would enable it to deliver what is being sought from having freedom of information.

The Army

The historic fame of the Algerian army is such that not even the most famous armies of the world were able to match its fame. The Algerian army was established to protect the bastions of the Mediterranean Sea, and its men fought to protect the bastions of the nation of Islam.

The Algerian army carries the banner of holy war to defend the religion of those who worship the One God. It stands ready to protect a prestigious, awesome, and impervious nation, guarding its defenses and extending its reach.

Despite the fact that their might was undermined in the wake of the invasion, and even though the power which they once had was taken away from them, the people of Algeria never surrendered. Instead, organized popular resistance appeared in their midst. The people of Algeria demonstrated their death-defying courage, their unwavering faith, and their ability to continue carrying the banner of [jihad] holy war. They carried that banner until God granted them victory over colonialism. They broke their own chains to secure their freedom and independence, and with God on their side, assisting them and securing their triumph, they regained their sovereignty. Then there were revolutions and the events of the Liberation Revolution. Our people are one army, and our army is one nation.

To maintain that same status for our army and our people, the FIS thinks the following reforms are necessary so the army can regain its historic reputation and its combat capability:

- Military educational programs are to be reformed so that faith would become their foremost characteristic. These programs include programs for religious and moral education.
- The army's morals [are to be reformed because] it is those morals that make the army courageous, proud, faithful to its responsibilities, earnestly concerned with interests, true to its word, and constant in its pledge.
- The army's scientific and technological military experience is to be upgraded.
- The army's materiel is to be developed, and army personnel are to receive serious training in the proper use of this materiel.
- Given the development in the military sciences and technologies in all fields of combat (land, sea, air, and space), top-notch academies are to be established to prepare leaders with the highest level of experience in military leadership.
- Military industry is to be modernized and upgraded to the required urban, advanced standard.
- Research and discovery in the military field is to be encouraged.
- The army is not to become involved in military issues so that it can continue its mission of being the army for the message, the nation, and the country. Thus, the nation's confidence in the army would grow in a manner that is commensurate with the growth of the army's morals, its aptitude, its job, and its ability to protect the country.
- To keep military service from being carried out at the expense of economic growth and social cohesiveness, national service must be confined to the military training that would give Algerian citizens the ability to defend their country. Length of service is not to

exceed six months of training, conducted under suitable conditions to develop the experience of the trainees.

- Service in the military and career military service must be combined. Career military officers are to renew their expertise by attending military service courses, which generations of young people have attended. Military education thus becomes a right to which all Algerian citizens would be entitled. All Algerian citizens would then be capable of defending their country when necessary. The rule that one finds in the words of the Almighty God stands unchanged: "Muster against them all the men at your disposal" [Koran 8:60] because one should prepare for war if one wants peace.

The history and the glorious achievements of the Algerian army go far back in time. But the Algerian army is also a young army whose experiences are new. It is an army whose people need to have monumental efforts made to give them the training and the experience they need to regain their place and achieve the standard which is required and is being dictated by the strategic value of upgrading an army's combat capability.

Foreign Policy

The FIS's foreign policy can be defined in the context of the following demands:

- Algeria's standing and its reputation in the world;
- Its moderate approach in the positions it takes; its even-handedness when dealing with international issues, with issues of economic and social liberalism, and with historical and cultural issues;
- Its current economic and political dealings are determined in the context of legal Islamic policy. Accordingly, Algeria would come to the aid of every just cause, offering as much assistance as it can to every nation that needs assistance. Algeria would be willing to support harmony and peace as these are defined by Islam. It would be willing to support world stability in a manner that would make the civilized world gain the upper hand, overcome its crises, and continue to prosper.

Islam is the doctrine that carries the greatest weight in the world. It is the most powerful engine for the conscience of mankind, and it is the most capable tool by means of which that conscience can be revived. Islam is the greatest divine message that has been sent to give mankind guidance; it is the richest source of benevolence and the most forgiving doctrine regarding the formation of man; and it is the fairest law that protects man's rights. Accordingly, the FIS's foreign policy is seen as a policy that protects human rights, since these rights are defined in the Koran and the sunna. Protecting these rights is one of the FIS's most important and noteworthy objectives. The FIS works hard to spread the word on human rights and to act accordingly, so that people would be spared the humiliation of such practices like

racial discrimination, torture, and the horror of imprisonment. The FIS works hard to remove restrictions on free speech and put an end to mistreatment, which is degrading and unbecoming of man's humanity. God Almighty said, "We have sent you forth as a blessing to mankind" [Koran 21:107].

MDRA Leader on Dissolution of FIS, Corruption

92AF0615C Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
16 Mar 92 p 3

[Interview with Slimane Amirat, leader of the Democratic Movement for Algerian Renewal, by Akila Benhamed; place and date not given; "'Ghozali Playing Politics'"]

[Text] Is Amirat charismatic? No doubt about it! Not only because of his curriculum vitae, but also because of his way with words and especially his assertive tone within the MDRA [Democratic Movement for Algerian Renewal]. He is a personality and a presence. Judge for yourself.

[Benhamed] How about an assessment of the situation to begin with, Mr. Amirat?

[Amirat] For some time now, a period of anarchy has been developing in our country. The MDRA has appealed for a restoration of order because one cannot build in disorder, and we prefer injustice to disorder. Everything that happens today is blamed on the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], but what has been created has been ignored, because the government has also been an accomplice, and on many occasions at that, by distributing the taxpayers' money and creating renegade political parties. It was necessary for Boudiaf to appear and say bluntly: "no subsidies for the parties." Ghozali gave the impression during his press conference, for example, that he wanted to accuse everyone by accusing the political parties of having asked for the dissolution of the FIS. But that is not true, because when someone oversteps the bounds, it is up to the courts to take action. We support enforcement of the law. What I don't understand about the dissolution of the FIS is the moment chosen for it. Why did they wait so long? So I say that the government is an accomplice. I will use the example of Boudiaf: why did he go into exile? Simply because he refused to be an accomplice in a particular situation, and now I am wondering: is this the Boudiaf I knew before?

[Benhamed] Haven't you had the opportunity to meet him since his return to Algiers?

[Amirat] I was at the airport to greet him as a companion and patriot. He is a person who demands a lot from himself, and in the present circumstances, being chief of state is not an easy job. He needs to be given time. Now if there is a welcoming committee, he may be the prisoner of that committee.

[Benhamed] Are you insinuating that you are afraid not of Boudiaf but of those around him?

[Amirat] Yes, I am afraid because those people know the ropes.

[Benhamed] Does that include the members of the High State Committee [HCE]?

[Amirat] I am not talking about the four members. I am talking about a system that has been in control from 1962 until now.

Anyway, the problem that has always posed itself in Algeria is simple. It has to do with power: how is power exercised in Algeria and who distributes that power?

[Benhamed] Well, Mr. Amirat, you are talking about power and abuses of power, and a moment ago you mentioned "present circumstances." So I am wondering why all the parties are keeping mum just when it is necessary to speak.

[Amirat] There are simple reasons for that. Disorder exists, and we want order to be restored. If we made more statements, it would be like throwing oil on the fire, and while there may be injustice, the interest of the nation takes precedence.

The MDRA has suffered injustice since 1962. We have been bullied and thrown in prison, and our members have been murdered because of this democratic process. We have seen people who should have been arrested but who remained untouchable. We denounced and challenged them many times when Hamrouche was in office, but nothing was ever done.

We talked about the political "mafia," saying that "as prime minister, you have the means to act," and the situation is exactly the same now under Ghazali.

[Benhamed] Do you believe, then, that we will go back to a hypothetical single party?

[Amirat] I will not go out on a limb like some people who say that yes, the rally means going back to a single party and so on. People also say: why did the Army get involved? But before the Army got involved, everyone was wondering what had happened to authority.

Now that it is involved, it is being called a "hissar" [blockade]. The MDRA wants a strong state: a state of law. We do not want a citizen to be humiliated even if he oversteps the bounds.

He is arrested, and the courts decide his case, but I would not like to lay a hand on his family.

[Benhamed] Are you opposed to those arrests?

[Amirat] They are arbitrary, and I am opposed to them. Now I am wondering: is the government punishing men or is it punishing a party? A distinction must be made. If parties in the Islamic sphere of influence are being punished, then the FIS is not the only one; other parties have said that they back the FIS.

[Benhamed] Are you opposed to the dissolution of the FIS?

[Amirat] Yes, I am. I will say that it overstepped the bounds in 1990 and on many other occasions.

The courts never ruled on those cases, but the perpetrators were in the wrong. Why wait until 1992? Why have so many died? I think that Ghazali, just like Hamrouche, is playing politics. No one is clean except him!

It is not one of the MDRA's traditions to fire on ambulances.

[Benhamed] You mention "firing on ambulances." Don't you think that that is exactly what is happening to our former President Chadli?

[Amirat] We have emphasized that fact in several communiques by paying him tribute. I will go even further. For your information, I have asked for news of the president and inquired as to his current whereabouts. I say and I repeat: I have never fired on anyone who was down. We have complete respect for Chadli, and we have said so. It is not my fault that the press has not reported it.

[Benhamed] Mr. Amirat, Algerians in general are still sullen, and even the latest cabinet reshuffle did not trigger a change. In your opinion, why did they become like that?

[Amirat] The only new people I see in that reshuffle are in the Ministries of Transport and Employment. The minister of employment is said to have belonged to the FIS, otherwise the government has purely and simply succeeded itself except for those two people. I think they will do a good job.

[Benhamed] What was your reaction upon learning that some old faces from the FLN [National Liberation Front] had kept their jobs?

[Amirat] I will say that they are not FLN people but people belonging to a system. Incidentally, I am wondering whether Boudiaf came along to save Algeria or a system. Algeria has a lot of confidence in Boudiaf and a few members of the HCE who have not been involved in the scheming.

[Benhamed] Can you mention names?

[Amirat] I can't.

[Benhamed] Eminent observers feel that the first problem to be solved in Algeria is that of population growth and that the rest (economy, education, and so on) comes later. What do you think?

[Amirat] It is true that population growth plays a part, but it is not a new problem. In my opinion, stealing and waste are the most important factors. Algeria is capable of overcoming this economic crisis; for my part, I do not listen to alarmist ideas. If those economists really exist, they will find solutions "without selling" the country.

The only thing is that the administrators who were trained in Algeria have demonstrated their lack of gratitude toward this country and are continuing to engage in speculation. There is no lack of honest men in this country, but the forces of evil are stronger. Today they are sending messengers all over the place to see who can get the best loan.

And I will say that when it comes to a choice between Algeria and democracy, we prefer Algeria.

[Benhamed] Excuse me, Mr. Amirat, but we hear that last sentence everywhere: you are simply repeating it. Come up with something else!

[Amirat] Well, I will repeat it to you.

[Benhamed] If you were asked to become a member of the HCE, what would your reaction be?

[Amirat] My answer? We would have to discuss it. I am not a man who comes running when someone calls, and above all, I don't want to be an accomplice to anything. If I accept that responsibility, I will have to be able to do so fully, otherwise I will make way for someone else.

[Benhamed] One last question: you have experienced, or the MDRA has experienced, two situations: the Hamrouche government and the Ghazali government. What difference do you see between them?

[Amirat] Hamrouche and Ghazali are both from the same house; the only difference is in the way they talk.

Cohabitation With FIS Rejected

92AF0683C Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
25 Mar 92 p 1

[Editorial by Ammar I.: "Coincidences"]

[Text] Is the situation at a deadlock? Certainly. With no way out? Certainly not. This about sums up our country's situation. A mortally wounded country that survived, almost by miracle, two successive attempts to put it to death, in June and then last January, and which still resists the enemies that hound it. With the fierce energy of those who refuse to give up hope.

Such a context does not secrete just disarray and ominous gloom. It is propitious to shady deals and conspiracies. It also produces strategic initiatives that are not always obvious or easy to detect.

Hence this paradoxical coincidence of a deadlocked situation and bustling, feverish economic activity dominated by a cacophony of shouts and whispers. But this is not the only coincidence. There are others that are far more dangerous. In particular the one offered to us by the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] choir of "mourners." These political staffs, these political-financial lobbies and their advocates in the media who impudently tell us that the only solution, the only way to get the country out of the crisis is a reconciliation with the FIS and its

acolytes from the fundamentalist movement, and putting them in control of Algeria. It is the fundamentalist terrorism that kills, plots, and threatens, but it is the republican State, its institutions, and its most loyal men who are accused of "excesses" and "human rights violations." It is large-scale speculation and its mercantile interests that disrupt the economy and exhaust its productive forces, but it is at workers and managers that the accusing finger is pointed, and they are the ones made to feel guilty by charging them that, for decades, they have done nothing but "guzzle oil."

That Djballah and Nahnah, pepped up by the equivocations and hedging of the democrats, should again bark up that tree, that was to be expected. That Mehri, Benbella, and Ait Ahmed should do the same, that no longer surprises anyone. But that all this should not elicit a vigorous and uncompromising reaction from the democratic civil society and the forces of the republican State, that is a cause for concern. It must be said in the defense of patriotic public opinion that it is not easy to find one's way between the firm attitude of the HCE [High State Committee] and the ANP [People's National Army] toward fundamentalism, and the conciliating approach of a Ghazali bent on resuming, with a few alterations, the disastrous scenario devised by Chadli. After admitting two fundamentalists into the government, he now takes Merani, another FIS leader, on his staff. The Algerians are waiting for credible and convincing facts to react and mobilize themselves. They have had more than their fill of duplicity and demagoguery. They will no longer be made to believe that the change they want, the future to which they aspire are to be found at the bottom of a treacherous ballot box that nearly served as a springboard for the worst enemies of change. They will no longer believe in the possibility of a cohabitation with the fundamentalist forces that planned the country's historical regression.

Code of Information Said Too Ambiguous

92AF0605A Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
11 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Salim Lamine: "Opinions of Colleagues"—first paragraph is LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] Heartbreaking, scandalous, unfortunate: These were some of the words used by journalists to describe the sentencing of Mr. Kamel Belkacem, editor of QUOTIDIEN D'ALGERIE, to a month in prison for a violation of the information code. Those concerns are widely shared. Already there is talk of a renewed muzzling of nonorthodox thought, a climate of suspicion and plans to restrict the activities of the press.

Algiers—According to Ghania Hammadou, editor in chief of the daily LE MATIN, "If it were really a case of libel, that is punishable by law, but what we have here is a blow struck at the fundamental freedom to inform and comment." "It's a precedent," she adds, "that may have wider implications in the future."

"I think the verdict was intended to come out as it did...as a sort of warning shot, leaving the door open to other sanctions, a threat meant to inspire fear and a return to automatic self-censorship."

The Association of Algerian Journalists (AJA) has spoken about harassment of the press, Hammadou points out, and it was right to do so. Finally, she says, "one has the impression that violations of the information code are pursued with excessive zeal, while other much more serious offenses seem to arouse little enthusiasm or interest."

Fodil Ourabah, editor in chief of *ALGER-REPUBLICAIN*, believes that "we have an obligation to ensure that the honor and dignity of citizens is respected, whatever we may think of their machinations, words, and actions. We must not go beyond what our professional ethic demands of us, but neither should the information code become the pretext for depriving us of our fundamental freedom, the freedom to inform."

Hamid Laribi, editor of the weekly *L'EVENEMENT*, believes it is becoming increasingly clear there is a political campaign to muzzle the independent press. "I do not think," he says, "that one could find anywhere in the world a case where the editor of a publication is sentenced to a month in prison for publishing a letter to the editor that the director deemed libelous. I think the sentence was excessive. I see the authorities deliberately cultivating a climate of suspicion, particularly vis-a-vis the independent press." As an example, he cited the statement by the head of government on television to the effect that the press was being manipulated by political forces...

According to Ali Bahmane, editor in chief of the daily *EL-WATAN*, it all comes back to the information code, "the repressive character of which we have constantly denounced."

"The information code as it stands is extremely repressive," he says, and it is therefore open to broad interpretation. The problem is how to interpret the formulations made in the code. For example, where it talks about "attacks on [an individual's] personal dignity," there is a lot of room for judicial interpretation, because the nature of what constitutes such attacks is not specified.

Moreover, the concept of a "press offense" is not spelled out clearly. There is no statutory language unambiguously defining a "press offense."

"The vagueness of the press code," he notes, "makes it unfortunately susceptible to too many different interpretations, and thus to many abuses."

Journalists have also expressed their determination to organize themselves in the most effective manner and react quickly.

Undoubtedly the information code remains the Achilles heel of the journalistic profession.

Many have talked about revising it, or even abrogating it.

"Absurd Verdict"

[The following is a] statement issued by the Association of Algerian Journalists:

"Our colleague Kamel Belkacem, editor of the *QUOTIDIEN D'ALGERIE* and former editor of *ALGERIE ACTUALITE*, has just been sentenced to a month in prison on a libel complaint that goes back several years.

"The AJA has already expressed its concern in a recent statement, and it has taken a firm position regarding the threat posed by the abusive enforcement of an ultra-repressive information code and by the absence of a clear and detailed definition of what constitutes a press offense. This situation leaves journalists vulnerable to a deadly form of muzzling from which the profession and the public have long suffered, and it threatens the fragile progress toward freedom of expression.

"The AJA denounces in the strongest terms the iniquity and absurdity of that verdict and calls for an extraordinary general assembly of journalists on Saturday 14 March at 2100 hours at Press House (May Day House)."

Possibility of Organizing Journalists Discussed

92AF0643B *Algiers HORIZONS in French*
19 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Ramdane Djezairi: "Journalists In Search of Union(s)"—first paragraph is *HORIZONS* introduction; boldface words, quotation marks as published]

[Text] More than ever the press is in the news. The profession of journalism has come under frequent attack. Every Tuesday, the court of Algiers hands down rulings on cases of "press law violations and defamation." The recent sentencing of Kamel Belkacem to one month in prison has only intensified the debate as to how journalism should be practiced. Journalists have only one association to defend their moral and material interests. Is that enough for a field that has been transformed—at least in a structural sense—following the circular of March 1990? Below, journalists give their views on the possibilities of organizing the profession.

Journalists belong to perhaps one of the few professions that never managed to organize to keep step with the changing times. The trend of forming associations has grown markedly, imparting a new dynamism to sectors once plagued by numerous problems that could not be addressed by public institutions. Specialized associations have been founded throughout Algeria. Unfortunately, however, those who are called the "Fourth Estate" have been unable to combine their efforts and decide how to organize themselves into a group. So far, only one association has been founded in the trade, the AJA (Association of Algerian Journalists), and it has failed to attract large numbers of professionals from the

various segments of the media. In fact, after three general meetings leading up to its founding, the AJA came into being with a mere forty or so members. It is a praiseworthy initiative and it came at the right time, as members of the trade are being taken to court every other minute. What a pity, however, that the idea itself was not enough to attract a large membership representing all media institutions. Political and professional differences merely accentuate this rift.

Some believe that in the present climate favoring press pluralism and the differences of interests and points of view that go hand in hand with it, no single association could unite all journalists. Others contend that a common point of departure could be established for the defense of journalists' interests, only the right formula remains to be found. Of course, that is where the problem lies. Opinions vary as to whether it should be an association, a society, a union, or a professional council. But journalists are unanimous in recognizing that ideas and initiatives for organizing their profession have failed largely because of memories of the MJA (Movement of Algerian Journalists). Just mention the MJA era, and disappointment and regret sweep over the faces of our colleagues. **"The movement was diverted from its objectives and co-opted by a wing of the power structure,"** journalists say.

That experience left an indelible mark on journalists and the memories cannot readily be erased. Now that the situation is no longer the same, is it possible to launch an effort that a large number of professionals could subscribe to? "That is possible," some say.

"Impossible," say others. "The time is not right. You cannot lay the foundations of a major union at this juncture." Journalists differ in their views of what should be done and how to go about it. Those who favor trade union pluralism (by whatever name) and those who advocate a single professional association are at opposite poles, far from reaching a common ground of understanding. Below, several colleagues state their views.

"The Movement of Category 14"

Ahmed Ancer, a journalist at EL WATAN and a leader in the now defunct MJA, preferred to begin by speaking about the major impact that movement had.

"The MJA," he said, "drew journalists from a single sector—the government-run media. Many members were prompted to join because of labor problems. In fact, some did not hesitate to call the MJA 'the movement of Category 14,' referring to the profession's classification number."

"Moreover, from one entity to the next, the problems were similar (censorship, socio-professional problems...). These two factors are what propelled the MJA, which served the purposes of that time."

But, new times call for new ways of organizing, do they not? "Yes," Ancer replies.

"At present, there are at least two legally distinct sectors: the private and the public. Those factors do not make it easy to bring journalists together into a single organizational framework. Their interests are not the same."

Ancer joined with others in signing an appeal for the creation of a professional association, but later withdrew. **"I did not find what I was looking for, and that is why I withdrew."**

But the need to found an organization is increasingly felt. **"Indeed, we cannot go without one. At present, priority should be placed on the issues of professional duty and ethics and on defending the profession. In addition, he believes that 'politicization (the existence of several factions) is inevitable in any trade union or association."**

Trade union pluralism is a concrete given. But there is a concern common to us all, and that is the defense of material and moral interests.

Another possibility to think about is a professional council made up of several unions.

No Compromise With the Authorities

Faycal Benmedjahed of ALGERIE-ACTUALITE has witnessed the different types of organizations that have come and gone since independence—the sole political party's affiliates (UJA [Algerian Journalists Union] and UJET [expansion not given] and the MJA. He has made the rounds—EL DJOUMHOURIA, EL MOUDJAHID, and SAOUT-CHAAB. Faycal leans strongly in favor of forming a professional council. As he explains, **"There is a minimum on which we can agree: the issues of professional duty and ethics and solidarity. But that does not preclude the creation of associations on the basis of professional affinities. For example, we could found local associations or unions that could in turn form a national federation. But, most important of all, the initiators must be honest, upright, courageous people who will not enter into compromises or deals with those in power or with political parties."**

How, Who, and Where?

For his part, Abderrezak Merad, managing editor at EL WATAN, admits to having been disappointed by the turn of events at the MJA. **"The movement had dynamism, but it eventually became mired in internal quarrels. That is why we are increasingly cautious. Cautious as to whom. Where do we go now, how, and on what basis? Those are the questions Merad asks. "Ideally, we should have one large association, not many small ones. In addition to that, we could set up a strong trade union to promote professional issues—nothing but the professional side of things so as to avoid falling into the trap of political co-optation."**

Was the MJA Democratic?

Ali Bahmane, editor in chief at EL WATAN, suggests a pyramid structure. First, each media institution would set up its own union. Once all have done so, a national

federation would be formed, bringing all of the unions together. "This type of structure proved its merit during the days of the MJA to which institutions sent their delegates. That way, the elected representatives speak for those who delegated them, and not for themselves, which would make for a more credible form of representation. The strength of the MJA was its democratic way of operating. All views could be expressed. It was not a bureaucracy. The coordinating leadership body was responsible for implementing the recommendations of the general assembly whose decisions could not be challenged. Things began to slip, by the way, when the elected leadership body was done away with. A future association or union should take its inspiration from the operating mechanisms of the ex-MJA."

New Faces

Memories of the MJA are difficult to erase. Young journalists are reluctant to venture onto uncertain ground. There are various fears. The MJA experience was too great a disappointment.

Zahreddine Smati of EL-KHABAR is of the same opinion: "Journalists are hesitant now to try any form of organization. There is a risk that any movement will be manipulated and led astray from its principal goals as the MJA was. And the success of any new initiative depends upon its initiators. If the idea is launched by the same old faces who have lost credibility, the professionals will automatically reject it. It will take fresh faces—young people, in particular—people not associated by the old regime. As to the newly created AJA, we should give it more time to see it at work." At this point in the discussion, another employee of the newspaper, Bili Abderrezak, spoke up: "It is impossible to bring all the journalists together. The young ones will not go into an organization with the 'barons of the press.' What we want is an association that will protect us—not individuals chasing after high-level positions."

The way in which the MJA collapsed make it difficult to start up a movement of the same scope. A colleague at this newspaper, El-Khadi Ihsene, believes that is why "even now, attempts at re-starting the movement are still viewed with suspicions of political manipulation, particularly since June 1991 when many differences in views emerged in the profession. This phenomenon of widening political differences is similar to what has happened in political parties."

In addition to the unfavorable political climate, Ihsene cites a second factor: "Journalists' energies are bound up for the time being in the new titles that are emerging, and that is an obstacle to any initiative to form a strong, close-knit union. But, after an initial period of settling, we can expect to see a reiteration of minimum professional guarantees. Socioprofessional problems will intensify. In theory, at least, the likelihood of an association will grow with the passing of time.

Our colleague thinks that several factors have worked against the recently formed AJA and prevented journalists from joining in large numbers. He cites three main reasons: "First, the fact that it was launched by former leaders of the MJA; second, the timing of its creation (between the two rounds of voting in the legislative elections); and third, the members of the profession were not all consulted. I say that without questioning the good intentions of the AJA's creators."

'Physical Nudity' Did You Say?

In all of the debate about organizing the profession, there are those who adamantly prefer to address the issues of professional duty and ethics, now more relevant than ever. Mr. Zouaoui Benamadi, general manager of ALGERIE-ACTUALITE, is one of them. In his view, "the paramount and urgent task is to establish a professional council of the press. The association or union aspect will require time. Time must be allowed for the emergence of different sensibilities along political lines or professional and sector-specific lines (television, radio, press agency, daily newspapers, etc.) That cannot occur in a climate of clear thinking until the honest and upright members of the profession make the effort to create a professional council that will take on matters involving defamation and work to halt the questionable media practices we are seeing today." "Sensationalism is driving many newspapers to deal in half-truths for the sake of sales. For now, our press is keeping its distance from sex, but it is already knee-deep in political murmurings. If it does not pull back from these questionable practices that affect individuals and people, it will—as I see it—inevitably drift into physical nudity."

Acceptance of Trade Union Pluralism

The idea of a professional council is also supported by our general manager, Mr. Abelaziz Sebaa who believes that "from the point of view of professional duty, our thoughts should focus first on the establishment of a professional council whose primary function would be to defend the moral interests of journalists and the free exercise of their profession rather than their material interests."

On the trade union issue, the head of our newspaper notes that "one of the great problems in the profession is that it has never managed to form a union capable of truly organizing the trade. As a result, the reality of the profession is shaped by differences and opposing views." He went on to add that, "To pursue the elusive idea of creating a single union is to refuse to recognize the reality. Journalists can organize themselves into several unions according to affinity (be it political or other). That would facilitate the subsequent establishment of a confederation in place of a single union for all branches. Up to now, political problems have prevented the emergence of a representative union. It was impossible to reconcile differing points of view. Now that a pluralistic labor movement is guaranteed by law, everyone is free to organize as they wish." "But the press continues to suffer from

polarized views, and artificial linguistic separation (Arab-speaking and French-speaking). The great danger to the press is that if this type of rift persists, it may give rise to division or organization along fragmented, artificial, and unionist lines" he concluded.

The Barons of the Press and the FLN [National Liberation Front]

Journalists now stand at a crossroads between the need to organize on the one hand, and political and professional disagreements on the other. While some call for rallying as many of their colleagues as possible, others prefer to "wait and see." And there are those who totally reject the idea of joining forces with "the barons of the press" as they are called. A young colleague who insisted on anonymity spoke his mind: "How can you expect me to enter into an association with people who accept horrendous salaries (particular in the private sector) and yet dish out pittance to young newcomers. How can you expect me to enter into an association with fat cats who think nothing of selling apartments while colleagues are housed in hotels. Clearly you see that our interests are not the same. I cannot enter into an association with journalists who have been on the government's payroll since 1962, who took whatever was served up to them (by the FLN, in particular) and who now want to make a fresh start on the backs of young journalists. Only the newcomers to journalism have nothing to regret."

In these turbulent times in which journalists are being taken to court one after the other as if they were mercenaries, they have no legal protection. The laws on information (another version of the criminal code) is no guarantee of freedom of the press. Press law cases for defamation can be counted by the dozen. In other countries, disputes over professional conduct are automatically handled by the unions. Here in Algeria, journalists have only the moral support of their colleagues (if that!). Will journalists one day be able to form a strong and unified entity capable of defending their profession? When will we see a press union go to court to take up a colleague's defense? One can always dream, as they say....

Arms Cache Discovered in Boudouaou Behri

LD1904224992 Algiers ENTV Television Network
in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Apr 92

[Excerpt] At the municipality of Boudouaou Behri, national security forces discovered an arms cache following a chase during which a policeman fell victim, before the perpetrator of the crime was killed. Here is Mohamed Belachia:

[Correspondent Belachia] Following the kidnapping of a member of national security in the Boudouaou district, national security men started the search for the perpetrators of this operation. Investigations led them to the Zannaz farm at Boudouaou Behri, which lies at a distance of about 5 km from the town, where one of the members of the armed group, called the Agents of God, lives. In fact, as the

inspector of police affirmed, it belongs to the al-Takfir Wal Hijrah [Repudiation and Renunciation] group.

When the security men entered the farm, this person who was wearing an army uniform received them by a barrage of bullets killing one of the policemen before he was killed. The security men also discovered a secret arms cache under the ground for hiding the weapons, in addition to it being a hideout for the armed group. [passage omitted]

Increased Violence Against Police Reported

92AF0643A Algiers HORIZONS in French
22 Mar 92 p 12

[Article by M. Atmani: "Violence on The Rise"]

[Text] A press conference was held Thursday at the headquarters of the DGSN [Directorate General of National Security] following an increase in acts of brutal violence in which police officers were the primary targets. "Since 7 February of this year, 18 police officers have been assassinated, 128 have been wounded, and 76 citizens have been killed in various parts of the country," stated the director of criminal affairs. Photographs of the brutally slain victims and of individuals actively being sought were posted on a board. The slaying of two police officers in Boufarik during the night of 16-17 March marked the start of increased violence. On the evening of 17 March, a police administrator and his 10-year-old son were cravenly assassinated in Ksar Boukhari, in the wilayah of Medea.

That same day, a driver at the wheel of a vehicle belonging to the Ministry of Justice had been killed in Ouled Aich (Blida).

On 18 March, two police officers, kidnapped in Ben Aknoun, were assassinated in Sidi Moussa. Police officers have become targets because they represent law and authority. But there is another reason as well: "...to procure weapons. But that is only a first step. Next, these weapons will be turned against the citizens and the security of their property. There have been numerous examples already."

An unidentified corpse with three bullets lodged in it was discovered last Thursday at the exit of the Oued Ouchayeh tunnel.

According to the director, the suspects being sought "are for the most part ex-convicts and drug addicts. However, they band into organized groups claiming to be religious fundamentalists. The investigation is well under way. But safety is a matter that concerns everyone. The population must join in an effort to marginalize these criminals."

In addition, the problem of misuse of authority by some members of the police was raised. The director stated that "any police officer who exceeds his authority is punished. A police officer was recently put on trial. The police are being policed to ensure against any abuse of authority." Nonetheless, as targets of the violence, the police need assistance in carrying out their duties in order to save human lives.

No one profits by brutal violence, especially not its perpetrators.

Minister Says Privatization Not Solution to Difficulties

LD2004142492 Algiers APS in English 1016 GMT
19 Apr 92

[Text] Algiers—Minister of Industry and Mines Abdenour Keraman solicited from the managers of public enterprises and the presidents of participation funds to give up considering the enterprise "a holy temple that cannot be touched even if its situation is daily deteriorating and threatening to collapse." Moreover, he added during a meeting of participation funds and public enterprises, we must say no to privatization for it could not be the unique and miraculous solution to all our difficulties. We have to envisage "without complex" all formula, all solutions susceptible of leading to a significant and quick rehabilitation of the enterprise including the participation in the capital according to well defined rules and in all transparency, he said. Therefore, the enterprise must be rehabilitated on the basis of a financial and industrial restructuring, the generalization of audit offices and the stopping of the degradation of the situation of some enterprises. In this regard, Keraman pointed out the seeking of all forms of national and international partnership such as processing, management contract, the exchange of production, subcontracting or the participation in the capital.

Furthermore, the minister urged managers to be aware of the gravity of the situation and carry out all efforts to bring out the appropriate solution "without dogma and without being intoxicated by partisans of extreme solutions nor terrorized by those who advocate the wait-and-see and immobilism policies". To Keraman, some managers already took initiatives in the field of restructuring, the seeking of partnership and personnel reduction. Regarding the last point, the minister noted in such a delicate stage, the state must play its role as a regulator of the social function. Eventually, Keraman stressed: The truth hour has come for the public enterprise when we take up the challenge we would have hence contributed to these drastic changes Algeria expects, otherwise there will be a real dismantling of the public sector.

Opinion Poll on Economic, Social Situation

92AF0654A Algiers L'OBSERVATEUR in French
8-24 Mar 92 pp 3-9

[Article by Malika Abdelaziz: "How the Algerians View Algeria"—first paragraph is L'OBSERVATEUR introduction]

[Text] Opinion polls are not to be dismissed, nor overestimated. That odd human need to periodically take one's pulse has reached our shores. Polls never fail to pose problems, even in other, more tranquil lands. The numbers—sometimes embarrassing, often troubling, and always controversial—do not go away. But again, we will not shrink from them. Already there are complaints that polls are a luxury beyond our means. Is it a luxury to look into the mirror? To dispel the unrealistic image we

have of ourselves? Are we really the most beautiful, the best, and the brightest? The next few pages may come as a slap in the face, because the answer is, No! Algerians are not the people they are thought to be. Social justice is more important to them than luxury items. Employment is more important to them than housing. They like order, and are very unhappy with the "absence of government" and "chaos." Algerians are fundamentally attached to a government presence after 30 years of it. They are not like the Afghans. Only 11 percent of them call for the dawla islamia [Islamic state]. They are resolutely in favor of social justice. They want honest people to govern them. Ladies and gentlemen, this is not a call to rebel; it is a poll and no more than that! At most, it is a signal to those who have the difficult task of governing us. Only those who refuse to see are truly blind.

Our poll consists of a battery of questions asked of 1,500 Algerians. It is a mirror held up to their individual lives and thoughts and their perceptions of a reality they all have in common: Algeria of today. The reflections of 1,500 men and women between the ages of 18 and 65, from different regions and walks of life, can be seen in the mirror. Superimposed on them is the image of a country that is said to be in crisis and lacking any direction.

Daily lives and visions come together, overlapping to offer a formulation of needs and desires, which can be interpreted as the most urgent demands and expectations of "the real Algeria," all of Algeria—if, that is, the readers find a reflection of themselves in the results that we publish here today.

On the responses to the first question: In one of his songs, Ferre lamented how often it is forgotten that "We are of the world." Algerians are of the Maghreb and the Arab world. In addition—a vestige perhaps of the days when "exit visas" were required—Algerians were thought to be insular, cut off from the rest of the world, and later fascinated by unlimited openness and super-market tourism. But the refrain of the 1980s, "They have everything, they live better," appears to have died out. On the subject of Libya, however, Algerians are silent. They see it as a major oil-producing country with a small population, and therefore rich. That reasoning is based in part on a demographic parameter that is not explicit in the responses, although additional questions might have brought it out. This first question is the only one that drew markedly different responses from men and women. Algerian women think of themselves as the least "fortunate" of North African women, although the poll did not include any related questions that would have allowed them to explain their view. Such as it is, their response conveys a protest, a demand, more than a reality. Algerian women seem to have set high standards. What is certain, they lack the influence in Algerian society to bring us all up to those standards.

And yet, in the responses to question 2, dissatisfaction and discontent were cited by a stunning 62 percent of those surveyed! The remaining third (33.2 percent) who

say they are "satisfied" are managers and self-employed professionals; but one wonders whether this group so often described their situations as "all right" (26.5 percent) simply to be done with the question and move on to the next.

Questions 3, 4, and 5: When speaking of his fellow citizens and society as a whole, the Algerian cites employment (57.66 percent) as the most urgent problem, with housing a distant second (19.97 percent). When speaking of himself, he again cites employment (38 percent, 51 percent [as published], and 24.62 percent) but "housing" takes on considerable importance, rising to 31.08 percent and 29.73 percent. It is true that each of the three questions implies a different vantage point: Question 3 speaks to the sociologist, the planner in all people; question 5 puts the respondent in a familiar position—that of a citizen who "personally" suffers from a given need; while question 4 places him in relation to the state as provider.

The extent to which employment is emphasized in the responses to questions 3 and 4 reveals the emptiness of the heated debate over the respective merits and failings of the two periods of Algeria's "development" (1966-1978 and 1979-1991): Both have clearly failed. The "sheik has died" (twice, in fact, counting Chadli as well as Boumediene) and yet the respondents still do not have what the first three-year plan set out to provide: Jobs! Jobs for everyone and every reason—in particular, to occupy the thousands of jobless workers. Evidently, the full lesson contained in these unkept promises has yet to be learned, since no one (or almost no one) cites a need to rein in demographic growth through birth control.

Finally, the way in which society is governed is sharply criticized by the 26.43 percent of respondents who complain of a general malaise, absence of government, and chaos. Does that mean that they are willing to play an active role in the restoration of governmental authority, the number-one goal of the HCE [High State Committee]? Nothing could be less certain in light of the responses to the next question and the attitude of "I'll give you something if you give me something," which seems to have guided the relationship between citizens, government, and society for the past three decades.

Question 6: As every successive leader would say, "Things must change!" And radically so, Ghazali might add, as two-thirds of Algerians believe that the system they live in is unjust. In fact, that sense of injustice is cited by 66.74 of respondents as the cause of low productivity in the Algerian workplace. In short, the Great Revolution under way in Algeria still seems to be "TAGHENENT TAKHESART"....

Question 7: A near majority of respondents (49.1 percent) goes even farther, stating in essence: "I am not to blame for the crisis; the state is!" Aside from seeing it as a scapegoat, what do they mean by the "state?" A heavyhanded father who puts everyone in their place by force? A patriarch with a mandate to oversee the public

good as if it were his own? Or a role historically unknown to Algerians except in obscure debates over the proper way to manage a free-market economy—a manager?

Actually, question 7 presents the issue in heavily polarized terms (top/bottom, state/citizen), playing all too easily into the commonly held perception. But it does point to a major problem: The perception being what it is and social consciousness having been shaped (or distorted) as it has, what will come of moves toward a more participatory democracy and the risk/initiative of a free-market economy? But, polls being ambiguous, the "statist majority" could also be interpreted as confirmation that the 1970's were on target, that the Algerian character favors consensus and centralization. Whatever the case, 34 percent of those surveyed did not ask the mirror to tell them that they are the most beautiful of all: They hold themselves partly responsible for the crisis in our society. Even though there may be some whose positions in the overall framework made them more to blame than others! Those who were put in place by the system or who are the system. The perennial question of the chicken or the egg. In response to question 8, in any case, 73 percent believe that those individuals, those who more at fault, were wrongly chosen and wrongly assigned, and therefore treated us wrongly.

Question 9: "Mahgour" [in a state of incompetence] gets no work done. That much, we already knew. But underlings do not get much work done because the boss is lazy, according to 32.73 percent of respondents. That means—to offer a first interpretation—that order, the state, and the boss set the pace for everyone in a society that looks upward: Fix the government, find good managers (for both government and workplace), and Algeria will be back on her feet! Another interpretation is possible, based on the "paranoia" of Algerians: a feeling that responsibility always lies with the "other guy." At this point in the questionnaire, the impression of a tendency to reject criticism and self-criticism is even more distinct. A third interpretation: an assertion of the "redistributionist" mindset, which should come as no surprise given the colonial experience (repossession and departure) combined with the social egalitarianism advocated and implemented only through such mechanisms as the SGT [expansion not given]. Cause or effect? This populist thinking condones and justifies the type of argument expressed here. It nurtures the Algerians' constant social frustration: "Why does the other guy have things that I don't have?" A question that is legitimate, revolutionary even though "egalitarianism" as a doctrine and vision answered it with ready-made, unachievable formulas. A society that does not work simply because the boss does not work is very far from the modern perception of individual and social responsibilities. Then, where does that society stand?

Questions 10 and 11: Algerian society stands ideally for social justice, that age-old, universal aspiration that raises the whole problem of remodeling the world. In Algeria, that new world, at a minimum, would be nationalistic and patriotic, since 23.2 percent of respondents

believe that officials who "have the country at heart" would be the third most important factor in motivating the country. The first two factors overlap: A total of 40.24 percent of the Algerians questioned see corruption and theft to be the primary obstacles.

The need to raise the ethical standards of public service is thus confirmed, but with the simplistic reasoning inherent in a moralistic approach to questions that are more complex. (See "Corruption Under the Scalpel" in *L'OBSERVATEUR* No. 51.) The Algerian's yearning for pure, absolute standards—when not merely a justification or pretext along the lines of the lazy boss or irresponsible government—is a genuine facet of his

psyche and should be analyzed separately. Perhaps, beyond the "elites" of Algerian independence, there remains in the genes some vague memory of an ideal state diametrically opposed to the profiteering state run by foreigners—whether French, Turkish, or other. You may well say: What does it matter? Homo Algericanus is constituted in such a way that in today's extremely complex world in which the only known and tested wealth-generating mechanisms are innovation and competition, he still resembles Ibn Khaldoun's description: primarily concerned with distribution and prompt to demand his share of the privileges held by the "well-established," even if it means sharing poverty in the end. In absolute social justice and equity.

1. Are living conditions better in Algeria than in Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, Egypt?
(percent of "yes" responses in each case)

Gender	Morocco	Tunisia	Libya	Mauritania	Egypt
Men	62.01	61.29	49.93	67.48	64.46
Women	42.79	37.93	34.64	39.66	45.30
Total	52.81	50.11	42.61	54.16	55.29

Algerian women see themselves as less well-off than other North African women as a whole. A majority of men, by contrast, believe themselves to be better off than the Egyptians (53 percent), Mauritaniens (54 percent), Moroccans (53 percent), and Tunisians (50.11 percent).

They Never Change!

The response to this question is an avowal of the love that Algerians feel for their country, as most respondents believe that "life is better in Algeria than anywhere else in North Africa." What complex individuals we are: Despite ignorance or stated doubt as to whether their neighbors would find happiness in Algeria, Algerians believe that their own living conditions are better than those of their neighbors the Egyptians, Mauritaniens, Moroccans, and Tunisians.... One thing is certain: Algerians are not likely to win a medal for modesty.

The dark spot in the picture is that Algerian women believe themselves less fortunate than their neighbors: In none of the comparisons did "yes" responses reach the 50-percent mark, and Algerian women seem particularly envious of their Libyan counterparts. Curiously, though, they consider themselves better off than women in Egypt and Morocco who are more emancipated than the others as a whole.

To sum up, the Algerian man is an unhappy but proud person; he has a high opinion of his country which he prefers to his neighbors' countries. Particularly macho, he causes his wife's unhappiness. In short, he has not changed.

2. How would you describe the economic and social conditions you live in at present?

Rating	Percent
no opinion	2.03
good	3.00
fairly good	3.83
all right	26.50
fairly bad	22.30
very bad	15.09
unbearable	24.62
other	2.63

In all, 62.01 percent of Algerians see their economic and social situations as poor, at the very least. With good reason. Only 33.2 percent are satisfied with the conditions they live in.

3. Which is the most important need to address, in your view?

Response	Percent
no opinion	1.43
employment	57.66
housing	19.97
health	6.76
schools	5.63
other	8.56

Algerians of today believe that more than anything else, employment is needed (57.66 percent). Ironically, the entire strategy of development since 1966 has been aimed at creating jobs for the male work force.

4. In which area do you most want the government to help you?

Response	Percent
no opinion	2.03
employment	38.51
housing	31.08
health	8.63

Algerians expect the government's help in solving their two most serious problems: employment and housing. Nothing has changed since 1966.

5. Which problems affect you the most in your personal life?

Response	Percent
no opinion	1.28
unemployment	24.62
housing	29.73
education	4.88
general malaise	4.43
absence of government	10.66
anarchy	11.34
other	13.06

Apart from the worries caused by the lack of employment opportunities and housing, Algerians also want law and order: 22 percent of those surveyed are troubled by the "absence of government" and "anarchy."

6. Do you think that our country's political, economic, and social system is just?

Response	Percent
no opinion	1.28
just	12.91
unjust	72.00
don't know	12.09
other	1.73

Of Algerian adults, 72 percent believe that their country's political, economic, and social system is an unjust system, one in which rights and obligations, rewards and punishments, are unevenly distributed.

7. What is the cause of the problems that the Algerian society is now experiencing?

Response	Percent
no opinion	2.63
government's failure to do its job	49.10
unwillingness of citizens to make an effort	12.69
both	34.01

other	1.05
don't know	0.53

Algerians are "statists" at heart. Of those surveyed, 49 percent attribute the present crisis is to the government's failings. Only 13 percent blame the citizens for not playing their part. Thirty-four percent think that the government and the citizens are both at fault.

8. Do you think that the principle "The Right Man for the Right Job" is practiced in filling positions of authority within our system?

Response	Percent
no opinion	1.28
yes	15.32
no	72.75
don't know	10.66

Algerians are not pleased with the way in which responsibilities are meted out under the existing system. Of adult Algerians, 73 percent think that the people in positions of authority were not the right candidates for the job.

9. It is said that Algerians do not work hard. Why?

Response	Percent
no opinion	1.95
mahgour	34.01
the boss himself does not work	32.73
dislike of work	6.16
laziness	8.86
other	16.29

Another injustice! "Hogra" [scorn, contempt] and the boss's poor example discourage Algerians from working harder.

10. Are you ready to make an effort for the prosperity of your country? If so, on what conditions?

Responses	Number	Percent
no opinion	34	2.55
if corruption is stopped	399	29.95
if thieves in public office are punished	137	10.29
if patriotic officials are appointed	309	23.20
if pay increase received for oneself	95	7.13
if problems of daily life are solved	312	23.42
other	46	3.45

Algerians are convinced that corruption exists in their country, that a small group of people are growing rich in the protective shadow of dishonest officials. It is noteworthy that only 7 percent of those surveyed demand to

be paid better in order to be motivated to make an effort. To the ordinary Algerian (the Chaabi), social justice comes before personal interest! Algerians prefer social justice to the acquisition of luxury items.

11. What do you most expect from the Algerian Government?

Response	Number	Percent
no opinion	64	5.04
end to corruption and theft	244	19.20
social justice	364	28.64
jobs	110	8.65
development of country	267	21.01
private development	23	1.73
true socialism	33	1.73
dawla islamia	140	11.01
other	30	2.36
don't know	8	0.63
total	1,271	100.00

The Sample

The participants in this survey were selected using the quota method. A total of 1,483 persons were surveyed, 518 of them residents of rural areas, and 965 of them

residents of urban areas. A breakdown of the sample by geographic area, age group, and sex is provided in the synoptic tables below.

Profile of Rural Sample (Age Group and Sex)

Region	18 to 29		30 to 49		50 and older		total	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Center	36	37	32	30	21	21	89	88
East	52	40	42	33	20	28	122	93
West	20	20	15	15	10	10	45	45
South	8	8	6	6	4	4	18	18
Total	116	105	75	84	55	63	274	244

Profile of Urban Sample (Age Group and Sex)

Region	18 to 29		30 to 49		50 and older		total	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Center	88	92	74	73	51	45	213	210
East	66	64	53	49	37	35	156	148
West	36	36	30	30	21	21	87	87
South	14	14	11	11	8	6	33	31
Total	204	206	168	163	117	107	489	476

Note to Readers: A breakdown of socioprofessional categories by age, sex, and region is not available. The socioprofessional parameter was therefore taken into account in the process of rectifying the results.

Two Questions Answered by Professor Abdelmadjid Bouzidi, General Manager of CENEAP [expansion not given]

[L'OBSERVATEUR] In Algeria's current social and economic context, can an opinion poll—even the most scientific—give a true reflection of reality?

[Bouzidi] A few myths about opinion polls need to be dispelled. First, opinion polling is not an arcane discipline requiring extraordinary scientific knowledge. It takes a team of scientific experts (a statistician, a computer analyst, and an experienced sociologist) and a good number of such experts can be found in Algeria and, of course, at CENEAP.

The technique has been fine-tuned; the method used is known as the quota method. Given the lack of an extensive telecommunications network in Algeria and the sheer size of the country, we must send out 10 or so teams of pollsters, and that involves considerable expense and operational planning. That is a major drawback. But we are very effective at it now, thanks to the experience of six previous polls conducted between 1990 and 1992.

To dispel another myth, polling is not an exact science; it cannot provide an exact picture of reality. That is true no matter what the social and economic context in which it is conducted.

An opinion poll enables us to discern the general trends that characterize reality at a specific moment in time. That last point must be stressed. An opinion poll is a snapshot of conditions that may change a short while later. There are many limits to what an opinion poll can do, but it is a great deal better than no information at all.

Quite obviously, in our country we are dealing with a society that is changing very rapidly while several of its facets have remained hidden. So, we attempt to "explore" it, and the results we have obtained are not disappointing. Far from it.

[L'OBSERVATEUR] Problems continue to arise in connection with polls, everywhere in the world. What about the polls conducted by CENEAP, since it is breaking new ground here—are they completely flawless?

[Bouzidi] I can say bluntly that no, CENEAP's polls are not completely flawless. First, there is the problem of selecting a sample. Usually, the quota method is used to develop a model of the population based on four parameters: age, sex, geographic area, and socioprofessional category. Then, quotas are determined for the types of individuals to be polled, based on their representation in the general population. In Algeria, we have a serious problem concerning the socioprofessional parameter: The information available at the ONS [National Office

of Statistics] is too broadly classified and does not allow for a more detailed breakdown within a given socioprofessional category. Moreover, there is no breakdown of the socioprofessional categories as a function of the other parameters: age, sex, and geographic area. So, after conducting the survey, we must correlate the results to the socio-economic categories available from the ONS—we ourselves classify the population we actually surveyed.

The second problem is one that we encounter with the female population we survey, particularly in rural areas. Algerian women tend to be reluctant to participate in a poll.

Last but not least, the third problem is that Algerians have little experience in being questioned for a poll. As a result, some of the responses are inappropriate. But with questions to check the consistency and logic of responses we can [text illegible] and eliminate disingenuous answers.

At any rate, I can tell you that opinion polls are still the best means to improve communication, which is important in the diverse and pluralistic society that is our goal and in the free society we are trying to establish. The CENEAP has taken up the challenge. If we go solely by the proposals for collaboration that we have received from such reputable establishments as SOFRES [French Opinion Polling Company], CSA [expansion not given], and Louis Harris, there is every indication that we should persevere and [text illegible] our tools to develop [text illegible] in our country. One last word, an opinion poll is meaningless if the pollster is not allowed complete independence of thought.

Plan To Liberalize Prices Criticized

92AF0645C Algiers EL MOUJAHID in French
16 Mar 92 p 3

[Text] In a statement released yesterday to our newsroom, the association Interests and Defense of the Consumer (IDEC) criticizes the decision announced by the prime minister to lift price restrictions as of 1 April 1992. The substance of the IDEC's communique is as follows:

"How can there be talk of freeing the prices of all products except three (bread, milk, and semolina) when public officials have failed yet again to halt runaway inflation, which has invaded all sectors of the economy?

"We consider this decision to be premature, particularly in view of the threat it poses to the country's social equilibrium.

"The bitter reality of the first days of Ramadan is there, revealing to us that the state is not in control of market conditions. Indeed, we saw fruit and vegetable prices double and, in some cases, triple in relation to their prices in second half of the month of February.

"Furthermore, we doubt the effectiveness of "Operation Crackdown" launched a few days ago by inspection agencies, and there are two principal reasons for our doubt:

- First, with the market in disarray, attempts to stabilize it will have no impact whatsoever on prices. For example, butchers continue to charge the same price for mutton (230-250 Algerian dirhams) despite government imports of 12,000 metric tons (?) of meat. This dysfunction of the market is the inevitable result of the failure of pricing agencies to act and the silence of public officials despite the escalation in illicit practices involving products supposedly subject to price regulation.
- Second, interest groups making a fortune in speculative activities are lobbying to ensure that legal action will not often be taken, even when violations are detected. These interest groups have become a sort of "Fourth Estate."

"The upsurge in the price of produce can be explained by the withholding of fruits and vegetables purchased prior to harvesting by deliverers who colluded to limit the quantities being sent to market during the week preceding the start of Ramadan, so as to create a false impression of short supply.

"The products can thus be placed on the wholesale market at very high prices, the day before the start of Ramadan.

"Indeed, the consumer will continue to be subjected to the dictates of speculators and dishonest merchants until the public authorities decide to act with determination.

"That is why we disapprove of the prime minister's decision to liberalize prices on 1 April, even if the liberalization is to be accompanied by the creation of a "safety net." We regret to say that we were not consulted about this mechanism.

"In reality, it will be impossible to implement the decision until every effort to guarantee market stability has been taken.

"Those preliminary efforts are as follows. (Our association had already issued several of these recommendations following the boycott we launched in April 1989, commonly referred to as the "basket strike.")

- expand inspection operations, and make them a permanent practice, with regard to the structure of prices declared by producers and prices charged on the market (monitoring of profit margins, billing, information displayed, etc.)
- set up a consumer information and price monitoring network in each wilayah, daïra, and commune, with computer links between the national level and the wilayat.
- set up a national price committee as a coordinating framework for defining price policies in each sector of the economy; its members would include government officials, representatives of professional organizations, representatives of consumer associations, and delegates of labor union federations.

"In addition, the IDEC calls on all consumers to inform the monitoring agencies in their wilayah of any illicit practice so as to ensure that regulated prices are respected. (We remind consumers that regulated prices are still in effect for 74 products and services.) If necessary, consumers should contact the association (IDEC, B.P. 378, Algiers-RP) so that we may initiate a collective effort."

Price Support Policy Criticized

92AF0697A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
12 Apr 92 p 1

[Commentary by M. Zabouri: "The Basket"]

[Text] Everyone nows knows that price supports have been more of a disservice than a service to society and the interests of the people. First of all this mechanism, by financing speculation, waste, and the leakage of merchandise to overseas markets, has made possible the development of a spider's web of parasitical interests. Those who have benefited from this system, whether large or small, are now an obstacle on the path of progress in Algeria.

At the same time this mechanism of price support has been a center for blurring realities, to the point of developing an irrational relationship between society and the economy. This kind of behavior applies both to the public and private sectors, as well as to the worker or simply to consumers in the marketplace.

As a result society finds itself facing an instrument panel of economic reality that reports false information. This false information necessarily leads to mistaken daily and strategic decisions.

Price support is also a mechanism of political power. It is used to "keep" society and all of the classes composing it in a relationship of dependence on the government. However, in reality the true workers, that is, those who create wealth, do not need to have the prices of essential products sustained for them. Their salaries should make it possible for them to have access normally and ordinarily to these products and to all goods and services

- ensure the uninterrupted availability of key products in sufficient quantities;
- clean up distribution circuits by expelling all parasitic operators and those merchants who operate on the fringes of the law; crack down on the informal market; reintroduce business ethics by working with professional organizations (establishing entry-level standards and periodic evaluations);
- allow six months (rather than three, as is now the case) for price revisions so as to avoid rapid price fluctuations;
- create the conditions for true competition;

which contribute to compensating them for the work they do. That is an economic law, but it is also a question of dignity.

The support of incomes is a mechanism that is both durable and transitory. It is transitory as we wait for the whole structure of a market economy to fall into place, to be fully broken in, and for society to be cleansed of the excrescences of parasites and unearned income. It is durable because in all societies there are forms of national solidarity with the unemployed, the aged, the handicapped, etc.

However, all of that will only be so much talk if radical decisions are not made to remove the obstacles to the recovery of agricultural production. Because it is meat, eggs, fruits and vegetables, etc., which burden our daily finances and make our distribution system one of the most expensive in the world.

It is also a matter of reducing the rate of unemployment, because with a jobless rate of more than 20 percent of the active working force, who will support whom? The problem is to do things in such a way that Algeria will become a place made profitable by investment and production and not a place of business for all sorts of outmoded activities.

It is also time for each of us to ask ourselves what we are doing for Algeria, after having been satisfied for a long time with asking, "What is Algeria doing for me?"

Anti-Inflation Efforts Postponed

92AF0697B Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
1 Apr 92 p 3

[Text] According to government data, consumer price inflation rose to 22.8 percent in 1991, compared to 16.6 percent in 1990. The National Office of Statistics (ONS) estimated consumer price inflation during the first nine months of 1991 at 22 percent, a net increase compared to the corresponding period of 1990.

Net loans extended throughout the economy amounted to 324.2 billion Algerian dinars [DA] in 1991, compared to 247 billion DA in 1990, while net advances to the state amounted to 152 billion DA in 1991, as against 167 billion DA in 1990. Disbursements from compensation funds rose to 47.2 billion DA in 1991, compared to 10.2 billion DA in 1990. "Rediscounted loans" by the Central Bank rose from 65.7 billion DA in 1990 to 115.2 billion DA in 1991.

For its part the Banque d'Algerie warned, in a report prepared at the end of 1991, that the combined increase of the money supply, the refinancing of commercial banks, and loans throughout the economy in 1991 threatened to result in substantial consumer price inflation in 1992.

According to the same source, the M2 money supply (bank savings accounts, cashiers bonds, and term deposits) increased by 17 percent in one year (September

1990 to September 1991), while the refinancing of commercial banks increased by 107 percent and loans throughout the economy increased by 32 percent during the same period.

This excessive monetary expansion, the bank points out, feeds the structural, monetary imbalance, which is shown by a net tendency toward price inflation in a context of stagnation in economic activity and underutilization of productive capacity. The bank estimated that wholesale price inflation amounted to 47 percent in 1991.

For his part Mokadem, director general of the National Office of Statistics, stated on 1 April that, "Using February 1991 as a base period the inflation rate during 1991 was in the order of 28.5 percent. In anticipation of the forthcoming liberalization of prices, it is very probable that during 1992 we will have an inflation rate of at least 30 percent."

In an interview broadcast over Network II of the Moroccan radio service Mokadem also indicated that, "Regarding the paradox between the liberalization of prices, which will begin after 1 April, and the struggle against inflation, it is clear that during 1992 this liberalization of prices will not make it possible to fight against inflation."

On the other hand, he noted that if there is good management of all sectors involved, we could hope to master inflation in 1993.

Regarding external balances, the government announced an increase in foreign exchange reserves, which currently stand at \$560 million, compared to a negative balance of \$890 million in June 1991, when the Ghazali cabinet was formed.

He said that efforts would continue "to reach the level of foreign exchange reserves that will make possible the effective liberation of foreign trade and recovery in the productive apparatus of the country." The projected level of foreign exchange in hard currencies is generally estimated at \$2.5 to \$3.0 billion.

The foreign exchange reserves of Algeria began to fall below zero at the end of 1989 and did not begin to be positive until 1991, "reaching \$100 million in December 1991, after the payment of overdue commercial accounts," he recalled.

Economic Recovery Plan 'Risks' Greater Debt

92AF0604A Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE
in French 20 Mar 92 p 10

[Article by Djamila Bouchra: "Caught Between Need for Economic Recovery and Risk of Overindebtedness"—first paragraph is LA VIE ECONOMIQUE introduction]

[Text] Tough and bitter negotiations preceded the signing of an accord restructuring a portion of Algeria's debt. It was a welcome shot in the arm that should enable

Algeria, which has been a problem debtor for some months, to get its economy on the road to recovery. But although everyone agrees on the objective, the direction taken seems to have given rise to controversy.

After much procrastination and many postponements, the accord to restructure a portion of Algeria's \$25-billion debt was finally signed on 4 March in Paris at Credit Lyonnais headquarters.

This accord should give Algeria some breathing room. But the negotiations received so much media coverage one would think it had impaired Algeria's international creditworthiness.

In fact, it was the main alternative to the rescheduling proposed by some Bank of Algeria officials. But it has taken a long time to consummate, and in the meantime its advisability has come into question. Initiated over a year ago by CPA (Peoples Credit of Algeria), which asked Credit Lyonnais to do a study on it, it has run into many hitches and generated much controversy in international financial circles.

Originally scheduled for signing on 31 January, then 14 February, it was not actually finalized until early this month. The delay was caused by reservations about the Algerian "political risk" factor lodged by several international banks participating in the bank consortium.

To alleviate these concerns, explain the political and economic situation, and sell the country's reform strategy to international financiers, Algerian monetary authorities opted for dialogue and intense communication with certain financial markets, especially the most important of them.

The objective: To closely monitor the short-term debt that has built up since 1986 following the oil crisis, and to bring in fresh money to get the country's economy moving again.

\$1.45 Billion

It is an arduous undertaking in a political context marked by convulsions that nearly put Algeria on an irreversible new course. At any rate, events now seem to have taken a favorable turn. The restoration of "calm" and trips by certain ministers, notably the minister of foreign affairs, to creditor countries in the EEC and the Gulf, have calmed anxieties and made it possible for Algeria to recover at least some of its earlier credibility.

The Credit Lyonnais deal, which represents only part of the restructuring, confirms this and puts \$1.45 billion at Algeria's disposal to pay off a part of its debts.

The accord is divided into two tranches: The first covers loans with maturity dates of at least two years, which have been rescheduled to eight years with a three-year grace period (during which only interest is paid); the second concerns shorter term credits, which are to be stretched out to five years. In addition, Algeria has

reached an agreement with Italy to restructure its \$2.7-billion bilateral debt. What does it gain by this restructuring?

Algeria must begin to make semi-annual payments on principal by January 1995 to retire them by 31 December 1999. This "restructuring, which could also be called a refinancing of the debt," has secured the release of various external credits, including EEC credits amounting to 400 million Ecus (European currency units) (\$500 million) for balance of payments support, World Bank funds on the order of \$350 million for the structural adjustment program, and finally IMF funds estimated at \$300 million.

Algeria is also counting on its own resources to bring fresh money into the "oxygen-starved" economy.

Recovery, Confidence

In this endeavor, great hopes are riding on the expected results of the new law on hydrocarbons. In fact, Mr. Ghazali, the head of government, calls it the "center-piece" of the economic recovery plan. According to Ghazali, the law "is intended to promote more and better extraction of subsoil resources, in order to alleviate the financial problems hobbling the efficiency of the Algerian economy."

But by virtue of its scope and ambitions, the recovery program has given rise to controversy in several circles. Some believe the plan does not entail deep structural changes, while others wonder if Algeria has the financial means to carry it out, noting it is a medium-term development strategy that cannot be expected to bring results for two or three more years.

The main objective of the plan is to restore public confidence and resorb unemployment by putting numerous factories in operation, encouraging the growth of PMI's [small and medium-sized industries], reforming state-owned enterprises, bringing new agricultural land into production, and satisfying pent-up housing demand.

A \$900-million appropriation has been earmarked for importation of construction materials. Vast resources will be required in this sector alone to satisfy the considerable backlog of demand for housing. And it is precisely the disparity between needs and means that some observers invoke in questioning the viability of the program. In that connection, one high-level official is convinced the current government has miscalculated. He notes the recovery plan is hostage to the vicissitudes of financial markets, which may lead to complications. He adds that "out of \$12 billion in external receipts, \$9 billion is earmarked for debt service. So how can they finance this program?"

Mr. Belaid Abdesslem, former minister of mines and industry, is asking the same questions. "Such a plan requires external aid, in the form of either grants or credits." In the latter case, there is always the risk the external debt burden will end up greater than before.

Indeed, some observers say it is inevitable, because the imports called for under the recovery plan are primarily intended for domestic consumption, not for industries that are supposed to manufacture products and even generate foreign exchange. From that perspective, Mr. Abdesslem sees no "miracle solution" to the country's chronic debt crisis.

Wartime Economy

According to Abdesslem, it is necessary both to expand the hydrocarbon industry and to practice austerity. In other words, if the country is to get rid of its external debt burden, a "survival policy" is imperative. This means using the majority of foreign exchange earnings to pay off debt, using whatever small amounts remain for the importation of milk for children and medicines, and for security.

Such is the concept of a "wartime economy" that could get the country out of the crisis, at the cost of closing down factories and keeping only those that have a ripple effect and support other activities. Without such an approach, Algeria, according to Mr. Abdesslem and other observers who agree with him, would soon have to reschedule. And that would be fatal, since Algeria would then be under the thumb of the IMF and its demands. It must also be noted that the wartime economy option is not easy. It presupposes a favorable environment: a strong state and absolute, reciprocal confidence between rulers and ruled.

But after having been tormented and politically destabilized these last three years, Algeria does not seem to be in a position to rapidly recover its poise, unity, and national solidarity.

In Algeria's case, adopting a policy of austerity means accepting a challenge that is sure to be onerous. But it may be worth it, if by doing so Algeria can pay off its debt with its own resources.

The question is a big one. And the decision will be difficult.

Rationale, Reaction to Export Ban Reported

92AF0682A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
27-28 Mar 92 pp 1, 3

[Article by M. Zabouri: "Textiles, Hides, and Leather: Decision Against Unfair Competition"—first four paragraphs are ALGER REPUBLICAIN introduction]

[Text] Importers are advised that ministerial order dated 14 March 1992, suspends imports of certain goods.

The order was issued by the Minister Delegates for the Budget and for Commerce, in application of Article 20 of the Customs Code.

The suspension ordered covers certain goods in the textile, hide, and leather branch; the decision was made

as a measure accompanying the economic recovery program, and is part of a series of measures designed to better protect domestic production.

Before any import operation, economic operators are required to visit the nearest customs office and consult the list of goods covered by the suspension measure.

The Minister Delegates for the Budget and for Commerce have just adopted "measures of suspension of certain imports." These include in particular textiles, hides, and leather.

They target the massive "trabendo" [a term for illicit dealing in a variety of things] practices involving these apparel products, which endanger domestic production through often unfair competition. Their surreptitious character enables these imports to evade taxation. Their promoters evade the burdens resulting from the transition of the domestic economy to a market economy. These include sudden drops in the exchange rate of the dinar, the countervailing tax, underemployment, reorganization, etc. "Trabendists" even manage to take advantage of the situation. The government, it seems, wants to bring order to the sector. For instance, in a memorandum, the Minister Delegate for the Budget emphasized the need to fight against the fraudulent imports of products that are allowed to be imported; these fraudulent imports promote unfair competition, which will be subject to antidumping or countervailing duties in accordance with current laws and regulations. This measure is already eliciting reactions from the parties involved.

In a statement, the Algerian Employers Confederation (CAP) considered that, in view of the constraints that burden operators in the textile and leather branch—in particular the lack of new investments, their strong dependence on foreign markets for their supplies, and the underutilization of existing production capacities—safeguard measures are required.

The CAP indicated that the production potential of the textile industry branches amounts to 340 million meters of fabric and 130 million items of apparel and hosiery, and represents 100,000 jobs.

For leather, the domestic production amounts to 95 million hides and 50 million pairs of shoes per year, with 20,000 directly employed.

If actually and effectively applied, these measures will deal a severe blow to suitcase-league "trabendists." But what about the major league? Those who are the cause of all our economic dysfunction. Those whose attitude is preventing the flow of capital into Algeria. But this is another matter, a matter of power control, society project.

In the branch, other businessmen raised the question of hide exports, which seem to have become legal recently. These exports, amounting to hundreds of millions of dinars, are tantamount to capital flight. They place our

steppe, its livestock, our slaughterhouses, and the prevailing feudal relationships in the service of Moroccan economy and a few Algerian speculators.

Hide exports are said to have been authorized although, in this field, there is a gap in the laws and regulations, which enables the State to play a modern part of economic regulation. This situation results in higher cowhide prices, increased illegal slaughtering, and therefore eventually higher prices for all leather items. As for exporters, any profit they make is due to the existence of two exchange rates for the Algerian dinar.

The producers who are the victims of this situation, speaking through the Chamber of Trade, asked for regulations in this respect, at least like those in Tunisia or the United States.

Impact of Oil Prices on Economy Discussed

92AF0654B Algiers EL WATAN in French
23 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Kamel Chehrit: "The Rules of Economic Realism"]

[Text] The dramatic decline in oil prices is making a bad situation worse. The gross domestic product (GDP) had already contracted, resulting in a precipitous decline in per capita GDP from 2,600 dollars in 1985 to 1,600 dollars in 1991.

This trend also means that the nation is growing poorer. The lower output of recent years and low productivity in the workplace have combined to cause rapid deterioration.

Parallel to this trend, considerably high salaries are paid regardless of productivity—a habit acquired during the good years of easy money.

"The Algerian model of consumption is among the least sound. There seems to be excessiveness at every level. In households, there is a real propensity to live beyond one's means. The same exists in the other segments of the economy—public administration, government, companies.... Austerity is still not being applied, despite the danger signals that have been flashing for years."

Those remarks by an economist who works closely with the World Bank sum up the reality of things in Algeria.

The truth is that the present economic troubles are less a question of unequal distribution of national wealth (although there is blatant injustice) and more a matter of highly unrealistic consumption patterns.

In the case of households, that refers to the bad habit of uncontrolled spending. A spending spree, the likes of which had rarely been seen, occurred during the month of Ramadan 1992, paradoxically coinciding with one of the worst downturns in economic conditions. A social phenomenon?

All possible explanations have been asserted: Undisclosed household income? Widespread borrowing? The main factor appears to be the government's reassuring presence and its ability to resort, if need be, to massive importation (and equally massive debt) to forestall discontent.

Those who know what they are talking about say that such a policy is shortsighted.

"In a deep-seated crisis, economic realism requires disciplined spending on the part of households as well as the other segments of the economy. Discipline is the only valid response if external accounts are to be brought back into balance and if the inflationary spiral is to be stabilized in a lasting way."

Implementing such measures, which may be painful, will require that the current policies of the government be stepped up to control inflation and the sources of public debt. Realism in wages, greater austerity in government spending, and most of all, social justice are necessary preconditions for restoring the economy to long-term health.

It is a difficult challenge to meet. Inflationary pressures remain in place. According to a governmental source, the money supply has expanded no less than 20 percent! That is a predictable consequence of continued failure to implement full budgetary austerity.

There is the additional burden of a 35-percent increase in the wage bill, an unhealthy situation as pay increases should normally be granted in times of economic growth.

Otherwise, a vicious cycle is triggered. Hyperinflation will set in and eventually destroy the country's economic fabric and what little social cohesion that remains. In short, the Latin American scenario of economies adrift in triple-digit inflation. That is a risk the current government will try to avoid, which no doubt explains an abruptly asserted willingness to put the rules of "economic realism" into effect.

New Strategy for Oil Exploration Announced

92AF0683B Algiers EL WATAN in French
30 Mar 92 p 9

[Unattributed article: "Prospection: SONATRACH's New Strategy"]

[Text] SONATRACH [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons] is getting ready to launch a campaign (starting next June) to promote mining properties through the sale of prospecting "data packages" covering areas that have not been much explored or not explored at all.

This new approach aims to promote competition among foreign companies interested in oil prospection in Algeria; therefore, it does not involve existing deposits

and is in no way an "auction" as was reported by the weekly JEUNE AFRIQUE, a source close to the Ministry of Energy indicated.

Five prospecting areas covering on the average 3,000 to 5,000 km² each, located at In Amenas, north of Hassi Messaoud, northeast of Hassi R'Mel, with another two south and southeast of Hassi Messaoud, will be offered to international competitive bidding. Mr. Attar Abdelmadjid, head of the SONATRACH prospecting division, told the APS.

SONATRACH is working with international consultants who will publicize these invitations to bid in oil business circles, and meetings are scheduled to take place in major oil cities worldwide (London, Houston, and Singapore) to make the Algerian proposals known, Mr. Attar added.

This is the way it is done throughout the world, he indicated, quoting the example of Argentina, which is about to launch a similar operation.

Besides, Mr. Attar emphasized, this is a prospecting activity carried out in partnership with SONATRACH, in compliance with the law on oil and gas that provides that all prospecting must be carried out in partnership with SONATRACH on an area granted by the State to Sonatrach because, according to the Constitution, the State retains ownership of all mining property.

The SONATRACH official explained the many advantages of this new method, as compared with the former method of contracts by mutual agreement. "Its main objective," he pointed out, "is to create competition among foreign companies and to enable Algeria to select the best offers. This is the only way to do it if we want to boost prospecting quickly."

"This method also enables SONATRACH—which sets the rules by choosing the prospecting area and deciding ahead of time what is negotiable and what is not—to market the technical data already acquired by SONATRACH or other foreign companies," Mr. Attar also explained.

Another advantage, the official added, is that "the offer must be accompanied by a bonus, i.e., a lump sum to be paid when the contract is signed, which also serves to decide between competitors."

In addition, Mr. Attar indicated, "the prospecting risk remains the responsibility of the foreign company, but SONATRACH wins in every case since it spends nothing

and gains through the acquisition of new technological techniques, the training of its cadres, and new knowledge in the mining sector."

"Oil and gas prospecting is an activity that entails many risks," Mr. Attar indicated, pointing out that foreign companies used to get data and surveys free of charge, while now SONATRACH is trying to get paid for them.

As is known, 19 prospecting partnership contracts with foreign companies have been signed, and the authorities count on getting about 100 such contracts. (APS)

Mining Sector Seeks Foreign Assistance

92AF0683A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
31 Mar 92 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Prospection and Mining: Contacts With Foreign Companies"]

[Text] In a state of advanced deterioration, the Algerian mining sector is going to receive the benefit of Algerian and foreign private capital, as the law on mining operation allows it.

"Contacts" have been made with international mining companies interested in partnership agreements to prospect and develop Algerian mining resources.

The first companies contacted were: AGIP [National Italian Oil Company], the mining subsidiary of the Italian industrial group ENI [National Hydrocarbons Agency], Billiton International Mining, a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell (Holland), BHP [expansion not given], a subsidiary of BHP Petroleum (Australia) and Reunion Mining (England).

In a first stage, they will get involved with zinc, sulfur, gold, and diamond deposits; during that stage, deposits of marble, salt, granite, and other ornamental stones will be reserved to resident investors.

The "Contacts" operation will be continued and intensified until the second half of 1992.

This call for new financing sources is an answer to the "regressive" situation that characterizes the mining sector, to quote the term used by experts, who explained that the specific characteristics of the sector—mineral resources are not renewable—make it necessary to keep looking for new deposits, and therefore new financing.

Although public investments between 1967 and 1991 amounted to about \$1 billion, the sector keeps regressing and "is on the wane," according to officials. Since 1967, 10 mines or so were closed, and another two may experience the same fate by the year 2000.

This may affect employment, the same official stated, pointing out that it is impossible to assign miners to other jobs. In 1991, the sector employed 11,940 people, compared with 12,380 in 1990, and 12,725 in 1984.

According to the same sources, potential areas containing all kinds of ores (sulfur, zinc, lead, diamonds, gold, marble, and salt in particular) are already awaiting development.

Consumers 'Unable' To Pay Market Prices

92AF0605B Algiers *LE SOIR D'ALGERIE* in French
11 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Akila Benhamed and Nabila Azzi: "Incessant Fluctuations"]

[Text] Algiers—Prices have been soaring since the start of Ramadan, and nothing the authorities have done in decades has succeeded in curbing the propensity of deliverymen and retailers to set their own prices. We verified the harsh realities during a tour of the market-places. Fruits and legumes are sold at prices never before seen. At first glance, it looks like everyone at the "Melah" market is buying: Meats, dairy produce, fruits, and vegetables are available in abundance and variety.

But consumers moving from stall to stall find that a kilo of tomatoes costs at least 20 dirhams, citrons and artichokes average 30 dirhams, and zucchini squash and green peppers run about 90 dirhams. At both the May Day and El Biar markets, we noticed, most people left the market with their shopping baskets far from full. Housewives this year are all buying less, and some products simply don't make it to the kitchen. "Zucchini is a luxury these days, so I buy potatoes, but even they have gone up two dinars in two days," one told us. Another confided that her husband has allotted her 200 dinars a day to run the household. An average wage is far from enough to buy everything one needs, but the merchants say they are pleased and their goods are moving very well. "There are always clients ready to pay the price, and believe me, they are numerous," said one fruit seller. "I move five crates of bananas a day, el hamdou l'illah" [praise be to God], he added, "and they were still selling even at 240 dinars per kilo."

So where are the inspectors? Consumers at the various markets are asking the question because they don't understand the abuses to which they are subjected. "Many can only stare at all these goods and walk away emptyhanded, trying quickly to forget what they have seen," says one family man discouraged by the prices.

Authorities Crack Down on Illegal Vendors

92AF0645B Algiers *HORIZONS* in French
11 Mar 92 p 2

[Article by B. Bens: "A Real Effort This Time?"]

[Text] Taking advantage of the leniency of some and the political calculations of others, speculators of all persuasions and their helpers have invaded even the smallest scraps of land to set up shop, taking over wherever they settle.

With no sales records to track their activities, the hawkers sell everything from their cramped quarters—fruit, vegetables, milk, bread, sweets—in deplorably unhygienic conditions. By day, the capital city teems with these unlicensed merchants, particularly near the large housing complexes.

The start-up process is simple: One vendor erects a stand, and if he is given no interference, tens of others flock to the area the next day to build their stands. These makeshift shops require little in the line of materials (a few supports and thatch or sheet metal), but they bring in a good deal of money.

The more savvy members of their trade have invested in cinder-block constructions, convinced that they are in business for the long term. Sidewalks, parking lots, playgrounds, and parks have been prospected and promptly taken over by them. Residents say nothing (probably out of total indifference), and their silence is interpreted as permission or acquiescence, which comforts the hawkers in the belief that they play a useful or even vital role in the economy.

But what explains the silence of central and local authorities? Could it be collusion or are officials overburdened with work as a result of recent political events? Whatever the reason, the vacuum has been adeptly exploited by these parasites who are proliferating at a wild pace, altering the environment, disregarding the standards of hygiene and all other standards, evading taxation, setting and resetting prices, and defying authority....

The new political order that emerged after 11 January 1992 made clear that it intended to reassert the authority of the state. A campaign by law enforcement agencies is underway to dismantle these illicit networks selling fruit and vegetables and taking advantage of the month of Ramadhan to exact exorbitant prices for their goods. Surprise by an unannounced "visit," some merchants preferred to flee, abandoning food and belongings.

In Bab-Ezzouar, the process of tearing down the stands has left in its wake a mound of debris on the sidewalk near the "8 May 45" housing complex. Will the crack-down be limited to only a few sites in the capital? Will it run the course of previous efforts that failed miserably a few days after they were launched? Maybe it will be done right this time. Let's wait to see what happens.

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